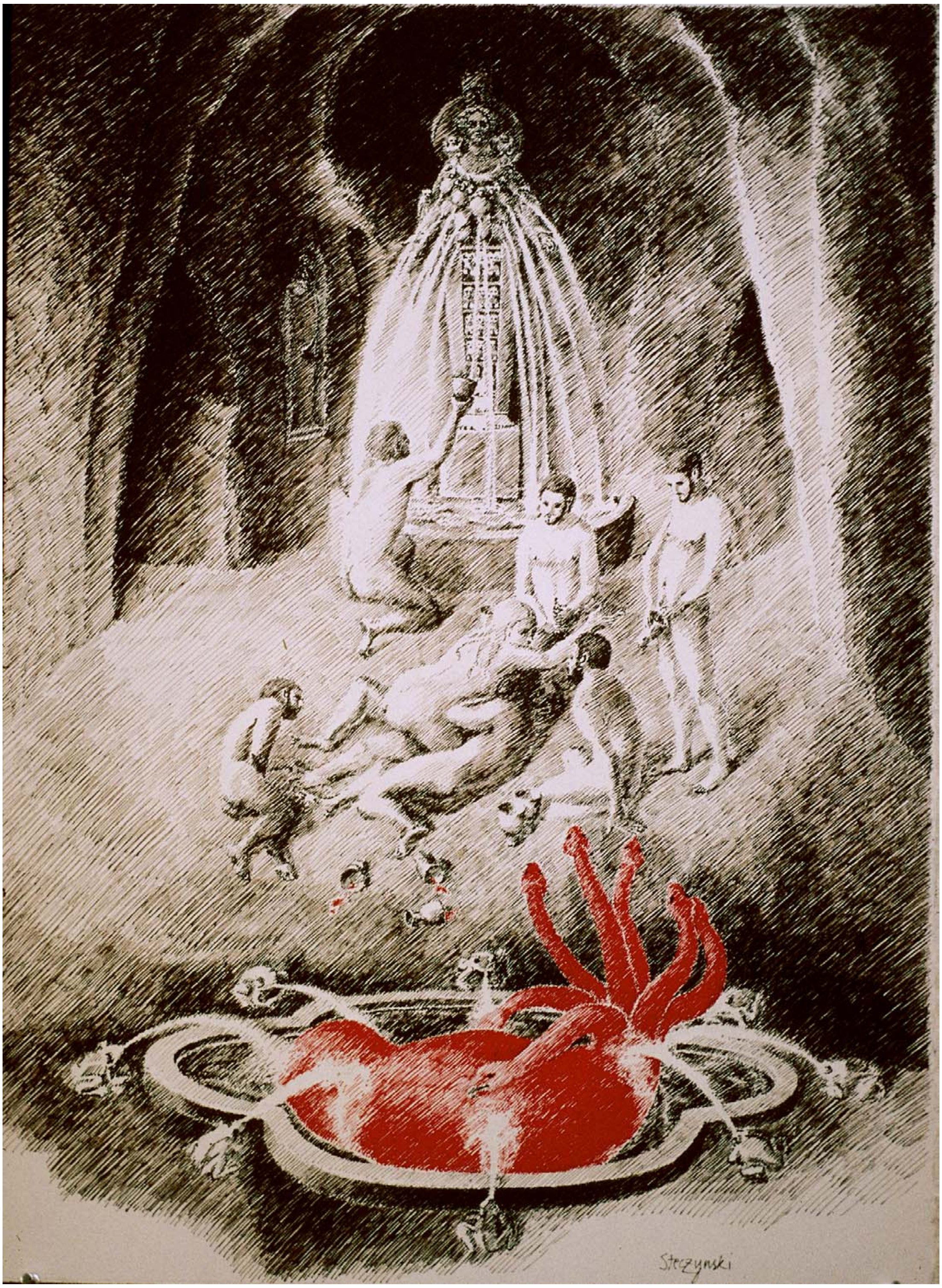
KAOS



Edited by Joel Biroco



"I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

Revelation 17: 1–2

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Editorial

The cult of Chaos conjoined with Babalon

An explanation for my long absence is called for. I left the occult "scene" in 1989 after what has become known as the KAOS-BABALON working, after editing *KAOS* for five years. Despite the intensity of the working, and the sense of triumph I felt and expressed in *KAOS* 13, I knew even then that I would be leaving, for in the wake of the working I sensed but could not then quite express that despite this triumph I had ultimately failed in the occult task set me, simply because no-one understood me, no-one was ready for what we had done, or few were, not enough at any rate. Or sometimes I even felt that I had been betrayed by the occult force that had led me… up the garden path it seemed by a series of ever more seductive illusions. It appeared only a handful of people really understood the complex matters I was dealing with, which, in turn, were expressed from various states of inspired demonic madness.

A girl called "Amodali"—her magical and stage name—was Babalon, I was Chaos. Looking back over *KAOS* 13 recently it dawned on me that even though she was the muse for that issue I never actually wrote much about her. For the sake of documenting underground occult history it occurs to me it is time to make good that omission. Amodali, who I lost touch with after KAOS-BABALON in 1989 and who is still known by that name, is now "Mother Destruction" with her partner Patrick O'Kill (formerly of the band "Death in June"), a goth band working with the Norse Seidr, a seething shamanic sexual trance gnosis. In early 1988 Amodali wrote to me in London from Amsterdam, where she had picked up some issues of *KAOS*, and asked me to forward a package to Nema in the US, prophetess of the Ma'at current. Her covering letter to me was written on the back of a colour xerox of a photograph of herself naked, on all fours, her body hand-tinted emerald green, third eye headband, and a couple of strands of black hair against her white-powdered face. She later admitted that this photograph was intended as a spell to totally captivate me. It worked. She identified herself by the number 156, the number of both Babalon and Chaos by Hebrew gematria. I was

beginning to doubt there were any women like Amodali out there, most of the women I had encountered on the occult scene up until then were New Age airheads clutching crystals who backed off when they realised I was into the kind of occult practice that they labelled "black magic".

Amodali worked in peepshows in Amsterdam to fund her musical career. Specifically her main venue was the "Walburga Abbey", founded by Martin Lamers in 1976 and annexed to Anton LaVey's Church of Satan. A little bit of history: Anton LaVey set up the Church of Satan on Walpurgisnacht in 1966 in San Francisco. In 1972 Lamers flew from the Netherlands to San Francisco to meet with LaVey and returned with the Charter for the "Magistralis Grotto", the first official European Church of Satan Grotto, which he set up in Etersheim in one of the oldest Protestant churches in the country. In 1976 Lamers bought two back-to-back houses in the centre of the red-light district in Amsterdam, in one he established the Church of Satan and in the other the Walburga Abbey where the clientele could watch the "sisters" perform "symbolic union with Satan" for "religious donations", or, at least, that was what Lamers told the Royal Netherlands Court when he sought tax exemption status.

Although the Walburga Abbey was essentially a Satanic sex club, Amodali regarded the Church of Satan as her plaything and used it as a place to manifest Babalon. She also invoked Baphomet there every day. It had typical Church of Satan chic: luminous skeletons in the lobby, goat heads on the wall, that kind of crap. The reality of the Walburga Abbey was that she sat upon an altar naked, the poor unsuspecting punter would come in off the street imagining he was going to get kinky sex. He entered the temple lined with black velvet and saw Amodali on the altar, who instructed him to sit close by and lay back with some money, fifty dollars or more, on his nose. She would then sit on his face and pick up the money. This is how Amodali described to me in a letter what happens next:

> Then I freak 'em out with some appropriate Satanic textbook nonsense. Suitably awe-struck, they begin to take in their surroundings, the gaudily painted "glitter" magic circles, inverted pentagrams on the walls etc. Of course they want to fuck me, I've been offered thousands, I just say "I only fuck with Satan, darling". The place has nothing to do with sex, real sex, only Power. All the time I've spent there naked, proud, amongst the most ridiculous slime of humanity, my inner core of extreme purity has been tempered to an exquisite degree. Thousands have gazed upon my naked beauty. None have been worthy of direct knowledge of it. They give money for the honour of looking and touching. Then they're commanded to crawl back to their holes. Thus can I support my magical and musical career.

After corresponding for a while Amodali flew to London and we performed the KAOS-BABALON working—an intense magical experience that still does not yield to my powers of description—and initiated the 156 current, which I wrote about in somewhat frenzied detail in *KAOS* 13 and here join with others to write about further in this current issue. So why the gap of over a decade?

I was at the pinnacle of my occult explorations, yet something within me drew me away from the occult scene completely. What had seemed like total success, the alchemist's dream realised, turned sharply into what appeared to be complete failure and illusion, and the glory, all too brief glory of Babalon, dissolved like a lingering mirage. I experienced it as the elixir of fulfilment and magical reality turning to ashes in my mouth. I was, quite literally, on the edge of magical lunacy and I recognised the signs in others who had gone before me—Jack Parsons declaring himself the Antichrist after his Babalon Working with Marjorie Cameron, for instance.

Amodali went her way and I went mine. I gave up Goetic magick and dabbling with demons, I gave up *magick* altogether, I threw my Crowley books in the bin and wandered, cutting myself off from my former accomplices in the occult, wishing to expunge my magical activities from the world. For a time I turned to the whisky bottle and wrote covertly about my profound sense of disappointment in *Yip-i-addy-i-ay!*, which I hand-set in lead and hand-printed and published in a limited edition of 75 copies at The Herculaneum Press in November, 1989. (See Nash, Paul W. "Joel Biroco and The Herculaneum Press", pp 77–91, in the Summer 1998 issue of *The Private Library*, Journal of the Private Libraries Association.)

I formally renounced magick with an oath to that effect, although, as I have found out recently—much as a sigil will sometimes momentarily return from forgetfulness to alight upon consciousness in the realisation of its accomplishment—such a renunciation is essentially temporary and little more than a redefining of oneself for another purpose and once that purpose has been achieved that oath ends, indeed, never was, for a renunciation of magick is a magical act in itself.

For the next few years I devoted myself to Zen, painting, and other writings, such as *Slow Volcano* (1993), a personal portrayal of Buddhist experience. I tied up a few loose ends from *KAOS* in *Kwatz!* (1990) and *Epoch* (1991), but I avoided, largely unconsciously it seems to me now, serious reflection on the meaning of the 156 current. One night in July 1995 I took seven years worth of unpublished notes, prophecies, and automatic writings associated with my previous life as an occultist, about 1000 pages, out into the back garden and burnt them, along with about 200 paintings, mostly of demons. (In the late 80s my rooms had my automatic drawings and paintings of demons stuck all over them, the kind of rooms that feature on TV news stories as evidence of insanity if

you go out and commit some horrendous atrocity, the camera would have lingered on a wooden skull with the seal of Astaroth on its crown, drawn in my own blood.)

In August 1995 I left London for a solitary retreat on Rannoch Moor in the Scottish Highlands, which proved to be a turning point. I sat day after day not seeing a soul in the thick mist meditating and listening to the curlews cry hidden in the low cloudscape (like a monk "behind cloud walls" as the poet Andrew Young once expressed it). I believe I had some sort of epiphany there which cast my previous occult activities in the shade. In the next five years I left Crowley, Chaos, and Babalon far behind—though I occasionally took an interest in Taoist talismans as a subject for paintings and raised the dragon by ritual at the spring full moon, I no longer considered myself interested in magick. So the last thing I expected was to find myself gravitating towards the Western Magical Tradition once again, in early 2001.

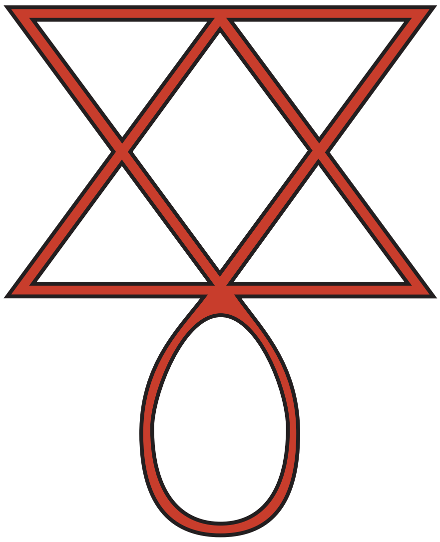
It slowly became apparent to me that I had not failed to manifest the KAOS-BABALON 156 current in 1989 after all, but rather we had indeed initiated this dynamic change but it had taken over a decade for the magical seed to emerge from its dormancy and start to grow (the blink of an eye in cosmic terms). At first, when I became aware that I was being sucked back into the world of the occult I had so forcefully slammed the door on, I was most apprehensive, not desirous of taking on "that unfinished business" again (as is apparent from my first response in the Correspondence section, "How the Chaos current died"). But the nature of the mail I was receiving—particularly from an American Enochian magician at the heart of "The Black Lodge of Santa Cruz" affair in the early 90s—made it seem worthwhile to once more put together an issue of *KAOS*. I am grateful also to Alan Moore for enthusiastically encouraging me in this endeavour, such that my resolve "never to return" weakened enough to get the ball rolling. As before, *KAOS* is a blend of notes, reflections, passing fascinations, correspondence, essays and, of course, satire on the theme of contemporary occultism. Some of it started off as discussions on the alt.magick newsgroup. For me, it seems to finally draw a line under the work of the past, yet I realise that for others it may open up a door they have only just become aware of.

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KAOS-BABALON 156 gematria

It is worth pointing out exactly how the 156 correspondence is derived. I originally changed CHAOS to KAOS in 1987 as a result of channelled information rather than Hebrew gematria, although it is indeed corroborated by the change of the Hebrew letter Cheth to Kaph. It is interesting to note the end of Crowley's skrying of the 3rd Æthyr in *The Vision and the Voice*: "…CHAOS, that is the four-fold word that is equal to her seven-fold word". In Hebrew Chaos rendered as a four-fold word is כעוס. Remembering that Hebrew is written right to left, כ (Kaph) = 20, ע (Ayin) = 70, ו (Vau) = 6, ס (Samech) = 60. Total 156. The seven-fold word is of course BABALON.

The origin of the spelling BABALON (as opposed to the Biblical Babylon) is dealt with in detail further on. In Hebrew BABALON is באבאלען. This breaks down as follows: ב (Beth) = 2, א (Aleph) = 1, ב = 2, א = 1, ל (Lamed) = 30, ע (Ayin) = 70, ן (Nun) = 50. Total 156 (Nun final, though shown in the Hebrew type, is not used in the gematria, but rather given the same value of 50 that it has when appearing in the middle of a word, when Nun is written נ). Note that ו (Vau) is used for "O" in Chaos (as it is in Crowley's 333 spelling of Choronzon), but ע (Ayin) is used for "O" in Babalon, and that Ayin is used for "A" in Chaos but Aleph is used in Babalon.



Aleister Crowley's cult of Thelema, or 93 current, emerged from *The Book of the Law* in 1904, Chapter I, verse 39 reading: "The word of the Law is θελημα." The "93 current" is so-called because the Greek word "thelema" (θελημα), meaning "will", adds up to 93 by Greek gematria, as does "agape" (αγαπη), "love", hence the Thelemic formula "love under will". In the Thelemic edifice, 93 is also the gematrical summation of "Aiwaz", an alternative spelling of "Aiwass", the minister of Hoor-paar-kraat who proclaimed himself to be the transmitter of *The Book of the Law*. The 156 current, the occult formula of KAOS-BABALON, emerged out of Crowley's skrying of the Enochian Æthyrs in Algeria in 1909, as recorded in *The Vision and the Voice*, and prior to this via the operations of John Dee and Edward Kelly. It is the contention of *KAOS* that the 93 current and the 156 current are not separate currents but points in a process. The 93 current is effectively dead now, with Thelemic orthodoxy clinging to its empty shell, 156 carries forward the reformulated current.

Correspondence

How the Chaos current died

Joel—In talking about the death of the Chaos current you said: "People like the IOT tied it all up in what I predicted and called 'nostalgia magic' in 1989. But potential never dies, and one day people may pick up the threads once again."

Come on bro, don't just talk it, do it. Haven't I irritated you enough yet? You killed it, now resurrect it!

DAVID CANTU

Actually, Stephen Sennitt announced the death of the Chaos current first, in his editorial in *NOX* 6 (1988), entitled "Obituary for the Chaos current", he wrote:

> Joel Biroco's slant on Chaos magic has also been short-lived and by my experience of him, transcended—if that's the word. We can see that this may have been planned, but I suspect he played it by ear. Perhaps at this moment Mr Biroco is happily considering himself the catalyst that destroyed the empty posturing we have called the Chaos current. A nod to him on that one, but let me be the first to announce that the Chaos current is OFFICIALLY DEAD!

In *KAOS* 13 (January, 1989) I said this was a premature ejaculation and I instigated KAOS-BABALON or "156 current", which I had been working on in the background as a truly "occult" (hidden) current, regarding Babalon as having occult identity with Chaos, essentially being female and male counterparts. It turned the Chaos current into a hard-edged and dark sex magick current.

I was very excited by the KAOS-BABALON development and personally experienced a tremendous amount of magical power associated with it. I regarded it as the "meaning" of everything me and Stephen and everyone else had been doing and where it had

naturally been leading. I felt it would "save" the Chaos current. I still believe that the 156 current is where it's at. But it was pretty much ignored at the time, it was just a bit too powerful for the IOT and other chaos groups. Yet they have never even mentioned it as being part of the Chaos current and that to me is a disgraceful failure on their part, showing territorial ambitions rather than a dedication to the Great Work. They just carried on doing the same old stupid stuff they had always been doing and are still doing. They have made no progress. It is moribund fiddling around. I suspect it will pretty much carry on like this, that's why I regard it as a dead current. BUT, within that dead current, that "nostalgia current", is a doorway into KAOS-BABALON. But at the time it was like we set off some kind of occult H-bomb and to be honest I still sense the shock waves from it. But it exploded what was. It sent me in a different direction. It changed a lot of things. There was a sense of disappointment, but that was only illusion, if powerful illusion. When I met up again with Stephen and Louise a year later I agreed with him that he was right, the Chaos current was dead.

I regard the 156 current as an essentially underground current of frontline occultism and the true successor to what was the 93 current of Thelema (now another nostalgia current) and also the Chaos current, both outmoded by KAOS-BABALON yet foreshadowed in both. It was either an idea before its time, or something that is practised away from the crowd. Maybe people practice something like it and don't yet realise it is the 156 current and what its great significance is. Occult education seems generally quite poor these days, people know very little about anything and lack even the most basic occult experience. Though I guess that's always been the same, only a few of the many who pass through the occult make real progress. But I laid down everything about KAOS-BABALON in *KAOS* 13. I didn't kill the Chaos current, actually I saved it for the future. Now that work is not easily available and my inclination is to let sleeping dogs lie. I'm doing other stuff now, although I guess something drew me here [alt.magick newsgroup] to tell you these things, to fill you in on "your chaos heritage". Many "chaos magicians" think the origins of the current don't matter and think being ahistorical is cool and iconoclastic, but it just means they are doomed to run on the spot, never swelling a progress.

Magick is about progress. As Ellic Howe once said to me when I asked him about his motivation for writing *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*: "If you don't know where something has come from you know very little about it." He was right.

I still don't think people are ready for KAOS-BABALON. It will probably be resurrected by some occult historian in 20 years time (perhaps sooner) and then maybe some practical occultists will come across it and feel that shiver go up their spines, the dynamic tug of a genuine current, and then it will spread like wildfire and initiate the true occult

revolution I always intended (and still intend) that it should do. It is an occult device ticking away awaiting its time. It will happen, I just don't know when. It's no longer, I don't think, for me to take forward, so don't look to me (unless change induces the role in me again and is more powerful than my resistance to taking on that mantle). More likely it'll be some drugged-up kid who plays bass in a band and is sufficiently fucked-up to be inspired by what we created as the future of the Chaos current. And they'll receive the transmission of it. No matter how much I "explain", that is not the same as the transmission of it, it's an initiation. Good luck to him or her, and who knows I may be around to kick him or her up the arse. I'll spare you the old adage about "when the student is ready the teacher appears". That's the way it is, take it or leave it. So maybe I did kill the Chaos current, but think of it as putting it out of its misery. But KAOS-BABALON, that's a different matter.

JOEL BIROCO

93 is dead, long live 156!

For me, and if I am understanding Joel correctly, when he states that 93 is dead, long live 156, he is re-emphasizing something that I think Crowley suggests, but doesn't stress for purely practical reasons (ie, he wanted the OTO to succeed).

Somewhere, and I don't recall exactly where, Crowley states that the Beast and the Scarlet Woman are to be considered as offices, meaning that they can at least theoretically be filled by any conveniently warm bodies. The confusion arises when we insist on attaching concrete entities to these theoretical concepts.

For a Crowleyite (what is mistakenly termed a Thelemite), Aleister Crowley WAS the Beast. End of story, beginning of interminable argument. For the Caliphate, Aleister Crowley, as 10th degree OTO, WAS the Beast, and his successor IS the Beast at this latter date (too simplistic I know, but it will have to do for here). End of story, beginning of interminable law suits.

For my admittedly hypothetical Joel Biroco, the Beast (approximating to CHAOS), is anyone assuming that office, should they be so bold. He is deliberately and explicitly emphasizing the injection of a random element: that who gets to be the Beast is in no way determined by their acceptance by temporal power structures, or indeed, perhaps, by any predictable process. Beginning, not ending, of story.

This is meant in *no way* to mean, "Oh, yeah, that's been done, dude. Aleister said

that. He said it all." For me, ideas, concepts, images, currents, all these things and more, if they are true (in the sense of existing in some form above and below the Abyss), have a certain timeless quality. And the nature of timeless things is that terms like *new* and *old* are irrelevant to the things themselves. 156 *is* a new current: it does indeed run contrary to the 93 current as temporally expressed in 1989.

I don't doubt that it was new to Joel back then, and it was new to me when he first stated it in this forum. And, 156 *is* the same old current: it is expressed in multiple places in multiple ways in the stuff that Crowley and doubtless others have transmitted to us.

I have here a quote from *Liber XV* I found last night: "I believe in one secret and ineffable LORD; and in one Star in the company of Stars of whose fire we are created, and to which we shall return; and in one Father of Life, Mystery of Mystery, in His name CHAOS , the sole viceregent of the Sun upon the Earth; and in one Air the nourisher of all that breathes. And I believe in one Earth, the Mother of us all, and in one Womb wherein all men are begotten, and wherein they shall rest, Mystery of Mystery, in Her name BABALON."

No explanation. A little orthodoxy seemed somehow appropriate.

SATYR

[Ed's note—Kenneth Grant says in a footnote on the name CHAOS in the above quotation from the *Gnostic Mass*: "In Crowley's copy of *Magick*, this name is replaced by that of AIWASS, Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, but is here used in a cosmic sense, the vehicle or medium of the Solar-phallic current." In the above correspondence Satyr says that the BEAST "approximates to" CHAOS, but as I understand it, and pointed out in *KAOS* 13 on p 12, CHAOS is a *secret name* of the BEAST, something I believe was originally stated by Kenneth Grant. On p 21 of *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God* (London: Frederick Muller, 1973) Grant writes concerning the number 156:

> It is also, according to *Liber 418*, the number of Chaos, which is a concept of singular importance in the qabalah of Thelema for it is a secret name of The Beast. Babalon is thus identified with her true Lord.

Crowley describes Babalon as the bride of Chaos in *Liber Cheth* (*Liber 156*), Verse 1:

> This is the secret of the Holy Graal, that is the sacred vessel of our Lady the Scarlet Woman, Babalon the Mother of Abominations, the bride of Chaos, that rideth upon our Lord the Beast.

See also *The Book of Lies* (*Liber 333*, first published 1913), Chapter 11, "The Glow-worm", where Crowley writes of "a seeming duality of Chaos and Babalon" and comments "Chaos and Babalon are Chokmah and Binah, but they are really one". Chapter 49, "Waratah-blossoms", takes Babalon as its subject. The waratah is a "voluptuous scarlet flower" common in Australia, hence its use for a chapter about the Scarlet Woman, which parallels the *Book of Revelation* in its repeated use of the number seven. *Revelation* 17 contains the famous Biblical depiction of the Great Whore:

> And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Although precisely which beast of those mentioned in *Revelation* "Babylon" rides is ambiguous—see the essay "The seven-headed dragon and the demon Choronzon" later—in *Revelation* 13:18 it is written: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." Crowley exactly parodies this verse with his similar statement at the end of Chapter 49 of *The Book of Lies:* "Here is Wisdom. Let Him that hath Understanding count the Number of Our Lady; for it is the Number of a Woman; and Her Number is An Hundred and Fifty and Six." In his commentary Crowley notes: "…the author frankly identifies himself with the BEAST referred to in the book, and in the Apocalypse, and in *Liber Legis*." One of the fundamental insights of the 156 current is that Chaos is the Beast, and not Crowley himself. Crowley certainly hints as much in his writings, but the importance of this distinction appears to have been lost on Crowleyites, hence the subsumation of the 93 current by the 156 current.

Chapter 49 also reproduces the seven-pointed star sigil of BABALON, which is the official seal of the A∴A∴ (Argenteum Astrum, "The Order of the Silver Star", supposedly Sirius). This seven-pointed star appears to have been modelled on the Sigil of Æmeth received by John Dee and Edward Kelly, a design of heptagons and heptagrams, plus a pentagram, which in itself appears to have been based on a similar figure found in *Liber Juratus*, more commonly known as *The Sworne Booke of Honorius*.

In Chapter 56 of *Lies*, "Trouble with Twins", Crowley writes "Holy, holy, holy, unto One Hundred and Fifty Six times holy be OUR LADY that rideth upon THE BEAST!" and comments "156 is BABALON". See also "The Star Ruby" and "Starlight".

In a note on the 12th Æthyr in *The Vision and the Voice* (*Liber 418*) Crowley remarks: "The formula of 156 is constant copulation or *samadhi* on Everything." The references to Chaos and Babalon in this work are particularly important in that they represent Crowley's first contact with the True Current in 1909 via the Enochian Æthyrs, after what is looking increasingly like a false start with the reception of *Liber AL* in 1904.]

The "Babalon" spelling, Enochian, and bondage

[Ed's note—In *KAOS* 13, p 23, I stated that the Babalon spelling of Babylon derived from Crowley's *Liber AL vel Legis* (*The Book of the Law*), but on re-reading *Liber AL* years later I was surprised to find that the word Babalon doesn't occur in that work at all, just "Scarlet Woman" and "Scarlet Concubine", and I am uncertain where I got the idea. I suspect I picked it up from an error of Kenneth Grant's, on re-reading his *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God* recently I noticed in his glossary he writes: "*Babalon*: The curious orthography stems from *The Book of the Law*…" (p 205). He also makes this error in *The Magical Revival*. Crowley in the commentary on Chapter 49 in *The Book of Lies* notes that Babalon "is the name referred to in *Liber Legis*, I, 22"—which reads: "I am known to ye by my name Nuit, and to him by a secret name which I will give him when at last he knoweth me." In correspondence with Satyr I asked him whether he knew where the first occurrence of the Babalon spelling occurred, my own suspicion off the top of my head being *Liber Cheth*. My enquiry prompted Satyr to do a bit of digging and he came up with a surprising find placing the *original* first usage of the "Babalon" spelling way before Crowley in the Enochian Keys transmitted to Dr John Dee and Edward Kelly. The first use by Crowley, however, is in *The Vision and the Voice*, which formed much of the original spark of inspiration that led to the KAOS-BABALON working. Satyr also went further into his interest in Enochian in response to my request for his reading recommendations. And, for spice, a little on knot magick and bondage related to the 156 current.]

Hi Joel—Glad you brought up the topic of Babalon, as I just found something interesting in my Journal on "156":

> 3 FEB III–19 [1990]—1033. Mountain View
> I slept well, cat bothered us. I recall from Dream, that I was transmitting "156" over some distance, & nothing more helpful.

To business! *Liber Cheth* is a damned good guess, and would have been mine as well. And you're real close too, but it was preceded in print by "Liber XXX Ærum vel Sæculi sub figura CCCCXVIII: Being of the Angels of the 30 Æthyrs: The Vision and the Voice" published in *The Equinox*: Vol. I, No. V (March, 1911). *Liber Cheth* appeared in No. VI (September, 1911).

Crowley was told the correct spelling of Babylon by an angel in the 12th Æthyr, where he also had the vision of the Holy Graal. This was received 4–5 December, 1909, 11:30 pm to 1:20 am, at Bou-Saada, Algeria. I looked in Regardie's edition, *The Vision and the Voice*, and found in a footnote to p 149:

> 14. Bab = gate. Al = God. On = ON. O=70. N=50. ON = 120. Note that Her Name does not appear properly spelt until the 10th Æthyr is done. The Seer had no idea how to spell the name till he was told by the Angel.

He apparently meant "done" quite literally. He wrote Her name in the sand with his Holy Ring at the conclusion of the "Vision" of the 10th, on December the 6th. According to Regardie, the source of the note was from notes Crowley scribbled in two of his copies of *Equinox* 5, most probably during the Cefalu period. It is possible, I suppose, that the correct spelling was printed by Crowley prior to March 1911, since it's used on the Seal of the A∴A∴, but I have no evidence of it before me. I'm glad you asked about this. Its first occurrence hadn't registered in my mind, until I started digging.

The first instance of the spelling "BABALON" occurs in the Enochian Keys, or Calls, transmitted to Dee and Kelly. There, the word *babâlon* is translated as "wicked" ("…a torment to the wicked and a garland to the righteous…": 6th Key, English translation). They received the 6th Key on Saturday, 14 May 1584, in Cracow. This may be found in Casaubon's *A True and Faithful Relation of what passed for many Yeers Between Dr John Dee and Some Spirits*, p 122. It's in one of Dee's magical diaries, entitled "Libri Mystici Apertorii Cracoviensis Sabbatici, An. 1584", a manuscript of which occurs in *Cotton Appendix* XLVI (sometimes called *Royal Appendix* XLVI, or Sloane MS. 5007).

Curiously, it seems that Crowley must have known about this spelling from the Key, but did not appear to make the connection, despite the fact that he received the Keys from the Golden Dawn (RR et AC, through Cecil Jones, presumably [*Ordo Rosæ Rubeæ et Aureæ Crucis*, or "Order of the Red Rose and Golden Cross", the Inner Order of the Golden Dawn—Ed]). In his own version of the 6th Key, published as "A Brief Abstract of the Symbolic Representation of the Universe Derived By Doctor John Dee Through the Skrying of Sir Edward Kelly Part II: The Forty-Eight Calls", in *The Equinox*: Vol. I, No. VIII (September, 1912), he gives the spelling as "babalonu". I rather doubt that

this represents deliberate obfuscation on his part, as the Golden Dawn used this funky schema whereby all "n"s were pronounced as "nu".

You ask, "What books would you recommend on Enochian stuff?". I told a friend just last night that if you read all the extant source material, and all the books that have been written about the material and related issues, making careful notes of cross reference with an eye to determining points of correspondence, and noting the differences, over the course of a year or so you might come up with a fairly decent understanding of the system.

But I'm pretty certain that's not the answer you want, since in your situation it's more smart-assed (though honest), than helpful.

My first introduction to the material was through Israel Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, though it's certainly not the best place to start. My first *working* text was *The Enochian Evocation of Dr John Dee* (Edited and translated by Geoffrey James. Gillette, New Jersey: Heptangle Books, 1984), which I am told is still in print in paperback under the title *The Enochian Magick of Dr John Dee: The Most Powerful System of Magick in Its Original Unexpurgated Form*. This is a *really* good text, constituting an attempt to assemble the material into the form of a grimoire.

In 1989, a new book appeared: *Elizabethan Magic: The Art and the Magus* (Robert Turner. Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books, 1989). This is an excellent text, giving a good introduction to both the material and its historical setting. David [Jones] and I worked from it extensively in 1990.

Much as I love these two references, they still fail to give the full picture as I have come to understand it. I could answer your question a little better, tailoring my response to your needs, if you could tell me what aspect of the system you wish to investigate (historical, theoretical, mechanical, consequences and influence, or what have you). I like the work of Dame Frances A Yates for historical context (*The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* and *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*, are the most relevant). She was a "real" historian, and the first to rehabilitate Dee, and show the profound impact he had on the course of European thought.

So, assuming for the moment that you don't know which direction you'd like to go, I'll give you what I think might be relevant.

Crowley's synopsis is given in two parts, in two numbers of Vol. I of *The Equinox*, both available online at:

http://www.the-equinox.org/vol1/no7/eqi07021.html [Part I]

http://www.the-equinox.org/vol1/no8/eqi08012.html [Part II]

This is as good a place to start as any, and obviously forms the framework for the work Jones was doing, and to which I myself made some small contribution. This online

version has the graphics in ASCII format, and as such, they stink. The next "must read" text (and I'm sure you already have), is *Liber 418* or *The Vision and the Voice*, or whatever title it sometimes assumes. It also is available online at:

http://www.the-equinox.org/vol1/no5/eqi05016.html

I can't stress enough the importance of this document. For me, *The Book of the Law* pales in comparison, and, more to our point, it is the "source" from which both "Chaos" and "Babalon" (as he understood them) spring. I direct your attention, in particular, to Æthyrs 12 and 4, and refrain from quoting them here in the hope that you will read them yourself. The 4th, I think, has the essence of the answer you seek concerning CHAOS being a *secret name* of the Beast. At the conclusion of 418, Crowley gives a brief outline of the nature of the Visions, and in that of the 24th he notes: "…the Scarlet Woman, who by men is thought of as Babalon as he is thought of as Chaos." With all due respect, what Grant may or may not have said is immaterial to the question [Ed's note—Satyr refers to Grant mentioning that Crowley replaced the name CHAOS with AIWASS in his own copy of the *Gnostic Mass*].

There is also a certain identity asserted between CHAOS and the Magus in the 3rd Æthyr, where Crowley receives somewhat of that Vision. At the conclusion thereof, he is told that the four-fold word CHAOS is the equivalent of the seven-fold word BABALON. That should get your attention. CHAOS is further discussed in the 2nd (a personal favorite), where the Magister Templi, having become one with CHAOS, is married to BABALON herself.

I can also endorse Ben Rowe's material (http://w3.one.net/~browe/enochian.htm), it's a fine introduction to the subject.

In passing, I will note that David believed (Crowley's assumptions notwithstanding), that the Key to the OTO lies in the 15th Æthyr, which is called OXO (based upon the name, among other things). I tend to agree with his evaluation. It is also noteworthy that in this Vision Pan is above the altar. This particular character appears to be represented in the system as the central governor of the 22nd Æthyr, PARAOAN, or so David believed. It was this entity that David called in Santa Cruz, in a successful group working, on 15 April 1989. My own calling, somewhat later that same year, and the data received through my skryer in that operation, appears to confirm his conclusion. In plowing through my Journals, as best I can tell, PARAOAN is the source of Chaos that manifested in our environment.

In all sincerity, these brief comments I've made barely scratch the surface of the subject. For me, the study of Enochian is the study of the Western Tradition. Dee is the probable cause behind the Rosicrucian movement, and Elias Ashmole's researches into the Enochian System is a likely candidate for the source of (modern) freemasonry, and

its attendant orders. Modern occultism in the West owes its greatest debt to the Golden Dawn, and that particular organization is a *product* of Enochian, as even a casual examination of its origins will readily show. The System itself appears to incorporate, and build upon, elements of Jewish Mysticism (most notably, "Merkabah Kabalah"), that themselves may be traced to Babylon during the Captivity. From there, it may be assumed that it disappears into the mists surrounding the Sumerians, and the beginnings of "Western" civilization.

Of human bondage, knots, and such: My extremely limited introduction to "Chinese Priest Cords" is from *The Ashley Book of Knots*, by Clifford W Ashley. I've been fascinated with knots and rope work since childhood. A friend of mine, when he learned that it was the technique involved that held my attention as much, if not more so, than the erotic uses of same, declared me to be truly perverse, as opposed to the ordinary perversion of enjoying tying-up a willing female.

Bondage is a definite theme in *my* experience of 156. In January of 2000, I became quite literally obsessed with *shibari*, the Japanese art of rope bondage. It's why the bondage theme in Michael Shuter's illustrations of *KAOS* 13 caught my eye, and I hoped that some part of the 156 current offered some tool that might be useful. After I left California, the reports I had of the developments in Santa Cruz contained many bondage elements, interspersed with the general sexual kink that I left too soon to enjoy. There seem to be several related bondage themes. The design of the Tarot Trump "The Devil", being the most obvious. In so far as "The Devil" is a representation of Pan, there may be a connection between PARAOAN and the bondage theme that emerged back in 1990. I am a little unsure of the connection between Pan and Kaos. Perhaps you have thoughts on this. Gardnerian Witchcraft incorporates both bondage and flagellation, in association with the Devil. The idea of being whomped-on by a High Priestess is not particularly appealing, though I'm not as violently opposed to the idea as I once was.

My essay "The Black Lodge of Santa Cruz": my understanding of events has deepened as I've poured over my Journals. You were quite right, by the way. It is imperative that I make some sense, if only for myself, of the events that led me to my exchanges with you. This becomes more clear with each passing day I spend at the task. My greatest difficulty is sifting through the many various themes and events, and determining what is directly relevant to the tale. As noted above, PARAOAN seems central to the entire story, in a way that is slowly resolving itself in my befuddled brain. But "he" stands above and behind the work, as it were, and is not necessarily a major part of the narrative itself. In this manner, that particular entity is not alone, and it's a little tedious attempting to tease-out the relative threads.

Your (our?) *KAOS* project has definitely taken on a life of its own. I've been corresponding with [deleted for privacy], off and on. She's somehow involved, as I'm sure you're aware. She recommended to me the book *Finite and Infinite Games*, by Paul Carse. This was the book that prepared me in a really profound way for your subsequent revelations on alt.magick. It suggested to me that I hadn't really "lost" back in 1990, and sent me back to studying and practicing magick just days before you began speaking of 156, and your KAOS-BABALON working.

Take care, SATYR

[Ed's note—Concerning the 10th Æthyr, Crowley writes: "Then the Seer took the Holy Ring, and wrote the name BABALON, that is victory over Choronzon, and he was no more manifest." Implicit in this Æthyr therefore is the idea that Choronzon may be banished "In Nomine Babalon". This also appears to be the very moment when Crowley at last "knew" Babalon, in the sense of the prophecy in *Liber Legis* I, 22: "I am known to ye by my name Nuit, and to him by a secret name which I will give him when at last he knoweth me."

The 10th Æthyr in *The Vision and the Voice*, concerning Crowley's dealings with Choronzon, is an amazing work of literature. The image of Choronzon being full of millions of mad voices whose greatest fear is silence, and that through silence the magician may best command him, is an acute insight. This Æthyr conjures up a fantastic image of the Scribe in his protective circle drawn in the desert, dagger at hand, with the Seer sitting in the triangle where Choronzon manifests, a sacrificed pigeon in each corner of the triangle, blood seeping into the sand. Choronzon—the possessed Crowley—distracts the Scribe and throws sand to fill in and break part of the protective circumference of the circle, enabling him to enter and rush upon the Scribe.]

Babalon and Lilith

Hi Satyr—Here's a few thoughts on your absolutely brilliant email on Babalon and Enochian, which I want to reproduce in *KAOS*. The discovery of Babalon in Dee is a notable thing.

Looking through Geoffrey James's *The Enochian Magick of Dr John Dee* (Llewellyn, 1998) I have noticed an even more convincing Babalon reference in Dee than the first occurrence of the word in the Sixth Key. On p 100, in "The Key of the Thirty Ayres",

there occurs the word *bábâlond*, which is glossed as "Harlot", the phrase reading *Baglen pii tianta abábâlond od faórgt telocvovim* ([Enochian script]): "Bycause she is the bed of an Harlot, and the dwelling place of him that is faln."

Certainly *The Vision and the Voice* played a great part in the original inspiration for our KAOS-BABALON working, and it was interesting to re-read parts of it. Anyway, here's some notes I made as I studied your email, not as full as I'd like but I'd be interested in your thoughts on Lilith.

The Vision and the Voice, incidentally, also appears online at: http://www.sacred-texts.com/oto/418/418.htm. Though this has chapter by chapter as separate webpages, making it more difficult to search in its entirety, they're better laid out for reading, and it has hyperlinked footnotes (the note numbers below are as they appear in this online edition). But you can't beat a book for straightforward reading, and the 1998 Weiser edition is rather good, with some notes and illustrations that have not appeared in print before. Previously I had read it in Regardie's *Gems from the Equinox*, which omits most of the notes.

In the note on Æthyr 24—"Now appears his mate, the heavenly Venus, the Scarlet Woman, who by men is thought of as Babalon as he is thought of as Chaos."—now who does "his" refer to, the "King of the New Aeon", Horus?

Mentioned in the 2nd Æthyr: "And this is the Mystery of the incest of CHAOS with his daughter." Not sure what this refers to.

Any thoughts on the relationship between Babalon and Lilith? Lilith is mentioned in the 3rd Æthyr. When we were doing the KAOS-BABALON working the idea that Babalon and Lilith are sisters came up a lot, but I don't recall ever reading that anywhere and I'm not sure whether I fully understood that at the time (not intellectually I mean, experientially I resonated with it). Note 23 on the 3rd Æthyr says: "Lilith is truly Babalon, as imagined by this energy of Mayan." (Presumably here Crowley is referring to *maya*, the Sanskrit word for "illusion". In notes on the 2nd Æthyr he refers to "Mayan the Great Sorcerer" and "Mayan, the *logos* who created the Universe of Illusion".) Note 26 says: "This is the Sigil of Binah in one of Her forms. It instantly destroys the illusion of Lilith, who now appears in her true shape as an avatar; a corporeal imagine [*sic*] of BABALON, recalling the maiden of the 9th Æthyr." The Sigil of Binah mentioned is a black shining triangle, apex upwards, that came upon the face of the sun. (I have had something similar—a black triangle, apex upwards, with three orange sun-like disks near each of the corners—on my altar since Sept 27, 1996, but it was nothing to do with reading this Æthyr). In note 31, interestingly enough, Crowley says: "The mystery of CHAOS is beyond the comprehension of any but Masters of the Temple." [In the

Weiser 1998 edition of *The Vision and the Voice* these notes are p 217 n1, n4, and p 219 n5, respectively—Ed]

The only other Æthyr in which Lilith is named is the 2nd, but I'm not sure I understand the reference there.

JOEL

[Ed's note—The circumflex given in James on the middle "a" of *bábâlond* is a typographical convenience. In Sloane MS. 3191, which contains the Angelic Keys in Dee's handwriting, on folio 13r the mark is actually a breve (∪), intended to indicate a short vowel. In the original MS. two further words are accented that are not indicated by James: *tiánta* and *telócvovim*. In the original MS. *abábâlond* ("of an Harlot") appears with a hyphen: *a-bábâlond*. In Sloane MS. 3191, above and between "telóc" and "vovim", Dee has written "tch", indicating that the word is pronounced "telotch" rather than "telok". *Teloch*, meaning "death", appears on its own three times in the Keys in variant forms, in the 3rd (*teloch*), the 8th (*téloah*), and the 11th (*telóch*), and once as the compound *telócvovim* found in the Call of the 30 Æthyrs. Telocvovim appears to be a contraction of *teloch* (death) and *vovim* (dragon) to form "him that is faln", about which I write more later.]

Hi Joel!—I'm glad you liked the email: I tried to rise to my scholarly best, and hoped that I'd succeeded, and was aware of a certain degree of inspiration at the time. If you wish to reproduce it, I should be honored, and by all means do so. I'm afraid I hold no such hopes for this rambling, stumbling little number.

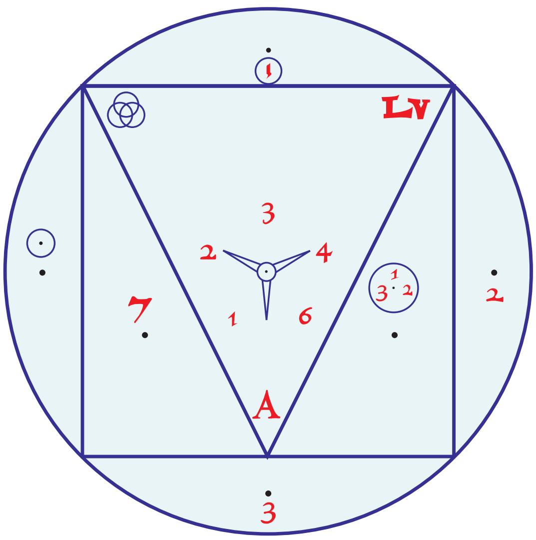
In the note on Æthyr 24—"Now appears his mate…"—"his" appears to reference the entity in the 25th. He, in the note on that Æthyr, is described as "the Lion God of Horus, the child of Leo that incarnates him". I don't think this makes things any clearer, but it does at least hint that it is some "divine" aspect of the Beast. Jones used to claim that the 25th was somehow related to methamphetamine. The "lion" might even refer to the demiurge of the Gnostics, and cognate symbols, as well.

As for "And this is the Mystery of the incest of CHAOS with his daughter." I'm not entirely sure myself. CHAOS begets a daughter upon BABALON, whom he then deflowers in the 4th Æthyr. Seems like a funky version of the formula of Tetragrammaton, which I suppose it is in some sense. The vision of her is in the 9th, I think, where the daughter is set upon the throne of the mother. The consequence of that is the sex scene in the 4th. She also appeared, or at least a form of her appeared, to John Dee and Edward Kelly: http://www.hermetic.com/sabazius/kelly.htm. [Ed's note—the webpage reproduces an

article originally published in *Red Flame* No. 2, "Mystery of Mystery: A Primer of Thelemic Ecclesiastical Gnosticism", by Tau Apiryon and Helena; Berkeley, CA 1995. Given the ephemeral nature of the Web, I have reproduced the passage obtained by Dee and Kelly about the "Daughter of Fortitude" in my note following this letter.]

I don't really know that there is a connection, but the Sigil of Binah is reminiscent of one of the "Ensigns of Creation" that are placed upon the Holy Table in the Enochian System (illustrated below).

This particular Ensign is associated with the Sun. I am wondering if there is a relation between the "black shining Triangle, with apex upwards" that appears in the 3rd Æthyr, and the "vast black triangle having the apex downwards", that appears in the 2nd. I have no thoughts on the matter, beyond this observation. It does seem relevant that the vision of one would follow closely on the vision of the other.



As for "The mystery of CHAOS is beyond the comprehension of any but Masters of the Temple." This seems fairly obvious, at least to me. The Master of the Temple sits there in Binah, utterly open and receptive to the influence of Chokmah. Chokmah, as the Magus, is, in a sense, CHAOS. Binah brings all things into manifestation: good, bad, indifferent. This manifestation only appears random and meaningless, good and evil, from below the Abyss, where Reason has power to make such distinctions. It also, with respect to the experiences and activities of you and I, reflects the relationship between the *Yijing* and the proper attitude towards it, and the Oath of the Master of the Temple, as you have noted before. I hope I've made this clear, but doubt that I have.

The reference to Lilith in the 2nd Æthyr is a little dense. I went back and read what Crowley had to say about it in *The Book of Thoth*: it didn't help much. I'm not sure he understood, or could explain, the concept himself. Lilith was the "mate" of Adam before the creation of Eve, according to Hebrew mythology. She bore him "children", of a sort. Sitting here, I can't really recall where I learned even that much. I found a reference to an article by Gershom Scholem, in which he relates that she and Samael issued from beneath the throne of Divine Glory, and that their activities there rocked its legs a bit.

I can appreciate Lilith and Babalon being "sisters", in a similar sense as Isis and Nephthys. I can also see Lilith as an Illusion that conceals Babalon. In purely material

terms, the physical manifestation of the Great Whore can be one dirty, stinky, grotesque affair. I don't know if you've ever read Crowley's "Leah Sublime", but if you have, you'll certainly know what I mean, it's pure nastiness for it's own sake. Crowley was assimilating "filth" into his conception of the Universe. The late Pat King ("King" of the Rite of Shiraz, and the official head of the 11th degree) once walked into a rather impressive orgy, in full swing, and read the poem aloud. It stopped the orgy, cold. It is as if the first illusion is the mundane perception of the whore as such. Moving past that, one sees her as symbolic of the object of desire she embodies (perhaps, the Scarlet Woman as an office?). Beyond that, we're back to the grubby reality of Her corporeal form (this is Lilith in the light of "the Sun" and an inevitable consequence of her corporeality), perceived as it "really is". And beyond even this lies the Archetype, the Great Mother, Babalon herself. To subsist beyond the Abyss, She would have to embody both a "positive" and a "negative" symbolism. Perhaps, in this sense they are "sisters", even as Michael and Satan are "brothers", twin symbols representing a unity of being.

The Master of the Temple does naught but tend his garden. This is essentially a passive transmission of the influence of the Magus, and this is symbolized by the passive acceptance of All by Babalon. The Master of the Temple transforms into the Magus by action, overcoming the understanding that any action begets evil. Perhaps this is symbolized by Lilith, a more "active" form of "feminine evil", milking the Word from the inert Master, and representing that evil and illusion that results from action.

I apologize for rambling-on like this. I'm hoping something will shake loose. I'm not too impressed by what I've written, but I'm sending it along anyway. I hope some good might come of it.

Take care, SATYR

The Daughter of Fortitude

The passage referred to above about the "Daughter of Fortitude", who is possibly identifiable as the daughter of CHAOS and BABALON who appears in Crowley's vision in the 9th Æythr, was received by Edward Kelly on May 23, 1587, and reads as follows:

> I am the Daughter of Fortitude, and ravished every hour, from my youth. For behold, I am Understanding, and Science dwelleth in me; and the heavens oppress me, they covet and desire me with infinite appetite: few or none that are earthly have imbraced me, for

I am shadowed with the Circle of the Stone, and covered with the morning Clouds. My feet are swifter than the winds, and my hands are sweeter than the morning dew. My garments are from the beginning, and my dwelling place is in my self. The Lion knoweth not where I walk, neither do the beasts of the field understand me. I am defloured, and yet a virgin: I sanctifie, and am not sanctified. Happy is he that imbraceth me: for in the night season I am sweet, and in the day full of pleasure. My company is a harmony of many Cymbals, and my lips sweeter than health it self. I am a harlot for such as ravish me, and a virgin with such as know me not: For lo, I am loved of many, and I am a lover to many; and as many as come unto me as they should do, have entertainment. Purge your streets, O ye sons of men, and wash your houses clean; make your selves holy, and put on righteousness. Cast out your old strumpets, and burn their clothes; abstain from the company of other women that are defiled, that are sluttish, and not so handsome and beautiful as I, and then will I come and dwell amongst you: and behold, I will bring forth children unto you, and they shall be the Sons of Comfort. I will open my garments, and stand naked before you, that your love may be more enflamed toward me.

As yet, I walk in the Clouds; as yet, I am carried with the Winds, and cannot descend unto you for the multitude of your abominations, and the filthy loathsomness of your dwelling places.

This passage comes from the *Cotton Appendix* XLVI, Division XII, "Actio Tertia. Trebonæ Generalis", ff. 218–220. In Clay Holden's transcription from the *Cotton Appendix* he says that "Circle of the Stone" in Casaubon's transcription should be "circle of the sonne".

Three years earlier the Enochian Keys were received, and, though it's a minor comparison, for some reason when reading the above passage certain words and phrases stood out to me as being reminiscent of phrases in the Keys. For instance, "the beasts of the field" appears in the 19th Key where it is represented by the single Enochian word *Levithmong* ([Enochian script]). Also both "dwelling places" (*fargt* [Enochian script]) and "dwelling place" (*faórgt* [Enochian script]) occur in the same 19th Key, in an extended passage that refers to a harlot. "The Sons of Comfort" is a curious phrase, the word "comfort" occurs nines times in the Keys (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 18 [twice], 19) and in the 4th Key is the phrase "the sons of Pleasure" (*Nor quasáhi* [Enochian script]). In Crowley's vision in the 9th Æthyr the "daughter of BABALON", who is also the "daughter of the King", is "she that is set upon the Throne of Understanding", whereas in the above passage the "Daughter of Fortitude" says of herself "I am Understanding". In modern tarot packs the trump "Fortitude" portrays a woman either wrenching open or forcing shut the gaping jaws of a lion, which is echoed in the wonderful phrase in the passage received by Kelly, "The Lion knoweth not where I walk". (Possibly the model for Fortitude is the water nymph Cyrene, a devotee of the moon goddess Artemis. The Sun god, Apollo,

saw the girl wrestling unarmed with a lion one day, and, being suitably impressed, he consulted the centaur Chiron about whether she would make a good wife. On learning they would make a good match he took her off to North Africa in his chariot.)

JB

Lilith in early literature

Concerning Lilith, *Isaiah* 34:14 (circa 900 BC) is often said to refer to Lilith, although this is contested by some scholars. Raphael Patai translated this verse as: "The wild-cat shall meet with the jackals | And the satyr shall cry to his fellow, | Yea, Lilith shall repose there | And find her a place of rest." The 1901 American Standard Version translates the verse as: "And the wild beasts of the desert shall meet with the wolves, and the wild goat shall cry to his fellow; yea, the night-monster shall settle there, and shall find her a place of rest." In the footnotes for "night-monster" it says "Hebrew: Lilith". Other translations include: nightjar, night hag, screech owl (King James Version), and night devil. This fits in with the popular Hebrew etymology, which derives "Lilith" from "layil", "night", although the word Lilith is usually derived from the Babylonian-Assyrian word "lilitu", "a female demon, or wind-spirit"—one of a triad mentioned in Babylonian spells.

The first literary reference to Lilith appears in the Sumerian tale "Gilgamesh and the Huluppu-Tree" (2000 BC), where she is a demoness dwelling in the trunk of what is probably a willow tree tended by the goddess Inanna (Ishtar). This tale forms the key to understanding the twelfth tablet of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the first twelve lines of which are almost completely crumbled away. Without the explanation offered by the "Huluppu Tree" story, the twelfth tablet is mystifying, and so many scholars include the "Huluppu Tree" as part of the epic. The twelfth tablet begins in the middle of a lament by Gilgamesh that the mysterious objects *pukku* and *mikku* have fallen into the underworld. In the story of the Huluppu Tree, Inanna finds the uprooted tree floating in the Euphrates and plants it in her garden in Uruk, planning to make a bed and a chair from its wood. But a serpent makes its nest in the root of the tree, the Zu bird builds a nest for its young in the crown, and the demoness Lilith builds her house in its trunk. When Gilgamesh hears that Inanna is distraught at not being able to use the wood of the tree, he comes and slays the serpent with his axe, and the terror-stricken Zu bird flees with its young to the mountains, while Lilith escapes to the desert (which is possibly where

Isaiah 34:14 picks up the story). Gilgamesh and his men then fell the tree so Inanna can make her bed and chair. In gratitude she makes the *pukku* (drum?) from the base of the tree and the *mikku* (drumstick?) from the crown, and gives them to Gilgamesh. Hence in the twelfth tablet of the epic we find Gilgamesh lamenting the loss of these objects, the identification of which is still not certain, to the underworld. The coupling of Lilith with the serpent in the Huluppu Tree in Inanna's garden of course is similar to the Garden of Eden story.

In later lore Lilith becomes a succubus and child-slayer. *The Alphabet of Ben Sira* (circa AD 800) introduces the most famous element of the story, that Lilith was the first wife of Adam who refused to lie under him for sex and abandoned him, fleeing the Garden of Eden. This text is believed to be an early parody of Hebrew literature. Lilith appears as the female of Samael in the *Zohar* (circa AD 1200), where she is described as an abominable harlot who stands on street corners to attract men. Forlong's *A Cyclopedia of Religions* (London, 1906) makes an interesting observation: "Lilith became the consort of Samael and together they are 'the Beast'…"

Robert Graves and Raphael Patai note in *Hebrew Myths* that Asmodeus and other demons were born of sexual union between Adam and Lilith and another like her named Naamah, Tubal Cain's sister, and that "Solomon suspected the Queen of Sheba of being Lilith, because she had hairy legs". Graves and Patai also identify the two unnamed harlots who come before Solomon to have the ownership of a child decided in *1 Kings* 3:16 as Lilith and Naamah, presumably because a child of one of the women has died in the night, which links with the motif of Lilith as a child-slayer and night-monster. The evidence for this association appears slim to me. As for there being a relationship between Babalon and Lilith, I have found no early textual support for this idea and so at present it remains an occult association to be further explored.

JB

Babalon the Whore: of the light?

Ok could someone please tell me what this fascination with Babalon the Whore is? The A∴A∴, the OTO, and other groups often claim to be servants of the light. I would like to know how certain magicians who are on the right hand path, in service to the Tetragrammaton, to purity, to light, to passiveness, to control etc can use icons such as The Beast 666, Baphomet, and of course Babalon. In *Liber ABA* Crowley says that this

information shall be transmitted only orally. Is it just that I don't understand the meanings of these icons, or am I dead on when I say they are more "negative", "dark" and "left hand pathed"? I don't find much light and wisdom in Baphomet and especially in the Whore. When I think of the brilliance of Kether and the host of archangels, the Whore is not exactly imagery that I find to be consistent with these holy creatures. Crowley did some great stuff, no doubt, but a lot of the Thelemic followers use these symbols, and Baphomet is not exactly a symbol of light and goodness to me. Could someone please explain this, because I honestly would like to get things straight. Thank you…

Lux Via Est

CHRIS

You apparently have a specific idea in your mind of what Babalon is about, and have decided you don't like this idea and can't see it as being "of the light". It's possible you don't have the same idea about Her that her devotees have; or that you do have the right idea, but are unable to see that Her attributes are "of the light".

In a Qabalistic framework, Babalon is the divine expression of the sephiroth Binah; that is, She is the wholly divinized idea of the feminine, encompassing more aspects than I could name here. These include ideas reminiscent of Bast and Sekhet, Shakti and Kali, and others.

The phrase "of the light" (that is, L.V.X.) is a little misleading, too. If I were to say, "Oh, no, you've got Her all wrong, She's *not* of the Light, She's of the Dark," that would give the wrong idea because you'd probably think I meant the *Infernal* darkness. I do not. I mean the Supernal darkness, which Crowley called N.O.X. (that's the problem of either-or, Light vs Dark thinking). This N.O.X. is not the antithesis of L.V.X., but more its successor in the spiritual journey. N.O.X. is the consciousness of the Supernals by the gateway of Binah, as L.V.X. is the consciousness of adepthood by way of Tiphareth. Think of the blissful, splendid, unending darkness of outer space that comes *after* one rises into the air-refracted solar light of the atmosphere. This is not at all the darkness that comes from digging a hole in the ground and climbing in. It is *more LIGHT* than the Light. It appears dark because the personality's sensorium cannot assimilate it. Its "darkness" is akin to what St John called "the Dark Night of the Soul", which is a dry fever of love for God so passionate and overwhelming that it burns us painfully and without release.

Babalon is called "whore" for many reasons besides the purely physical-sexual. But, especially, She is an aspect of divinity that absorbs all—that "takes all comers". She is

that within us which remains open to taking in indiscriminately, and being filled by, anything and everything that comes in the course of life. We happily spread our legs for every experience that wants to have its way with us!

Who said we were in service to Tetragrammaton? We may be, or may not be. If IHVH is your image for the Most High, then that which you are calling by that Name I would call by another. Regardless—you profess to be trying to understand where others are coming from. The ancient Gnostic view of IHVH is as the brat upstart demiurge who reaches no farther up the Tree than Chesed (He is of the number 4)—that is, falls below the Abyss, outside the Supernal realm, as a mental-moral construct. If this is the IHVH you mean, then Babalon is a higher idea. If you mean the early Kabbalistic references to IHVH as the Divine Name of Tiphareth, then Babalon, as Lady of Binah, is the higher idea.

Purity? Yes, absolutely, though we would probably differ on what the word means. (It certainly doesn't mean prudish, for example. All sexuality is sacred.) In service to passiveness? I'm sure we differ more here than in anything else you said! Receptive, yes. Taking all comers, yes. Passive? No. (Except as a delicious counterpoint to Active.) Control? Discipline is an essential part of the Great Work, just as it is to great sex. Also, surrender is essential to both. (Even at the gutter level, if you think a typical whore is without control, you should go out and meet a few more, because you've got the *wrong* idea, babe.)

As for oral transmission, some of it *can* only be translated orally. As for whether Babalon and Baphomet are "left hand path", some people who identify themselves as LHP embrace these deities as falling in that category. But the deities themselves are not so narrow. Any Supernal idea stands outside dualistic labels of this kind from below the Abyss. When you say that you "don't find much light and wisdom in Baphomet", you are, perhaps, unaware that "Baphomet" was a Kabbalistic code word that a group of Christian military monks coined to veil the Gnostic idea of Sophia—one of the most sublime and holy ideas ever to infuse Western civilization's spirituality.

Respectfully, I submit that you cannot think of the brilliance of Kether. Respectfully, I suggest that your highest idea of Kether is no more than a reflection of Tiphareth and might, in fact, really be only a reflection of that in Yesod. This is not intended as a put-down of any kind. Kether is beyond thought.

The hosts of archangels of which you speak are a lesser domain of spiritual being than Babalon. She is the Supernal Queen to whom they turn in adoration.

93 93/93
56 NUIT

[Ed's note—Concerning oral transmission, in "Of our Lady Babalon and of the Beast whereon she rideth", Chapter XI of *Magick in Theory and Practice*, part of *Liber ABA*, Crowley notes: "The contents of this section, inasmuch as they concern OUR LADY, are too important and too sacred to be printed. They are only communicated by the Master Therion to chosen pupils in private instruction." For those unfamiliar with Thelemic signatures, 93/93 refers to "love under will", both *thelema* and *agape* being 93. 56 is the number of Nuit (*Liber AL* I, 24)]

Gematria of Jubalcain

Hi Joel—I was re-reading your editorial from *KAOS* 13, and detoured into an investigation of, or meditation on, "Jubalcain". It does seem, on examination, at least as profound as you say.

I know how you hate kabbalah-babble, but if we take it as Hebrew, we get:

> IVBLQIN (יובלקין) = 10+6+2+30+100+10+700 = 858 (taking Nun final as 700) = AThE GBVR LOVLM ADNI "To Thee be Power unto the Ages, my Lord", traditionally seen abbreviated by the notariqon AGLA, the "god name" used for North/Earth in the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram.

From an etymological standpoint, IVBL (יובל) can mean "stream", or "river", and QIN (קין) can be taken as "to form", or "to prepare".

IVBL is assumed in *Genesis* 4:21 to mean the sound of musical instruments (like trumpets, with a hint of *Revelation* and the *Koran*), but there is also the obvious association with the Jubilee (ShNTh H-IVBL), the year in which slaves were to be freed.

Thus, *my* two favorite possible readings so far are "to form a current", and "to prepare a Jubilee", using, of course, the traditional rough-and-ready etymologies appropriate to a kabbalistic discourse of this kind.

There is also an implied union of male and female, since QNE (possible root of the name "Cain"), can mean "to erect" or "a reed" (again we get a whiff of *Revelation*, with a little Prometheus thrown in for good measure), and IBL (a possible root of "Jubal"), can be read as "to flow, especially copiously" or "to produce, to bring forth".

QIN itself is translated as "spear" in *2 Samuel* 21:16 (the verse here cited tells the weight of the spear hefted by the Philistine giant who nearly slew David. The other one, Ish'bi-be'nob, not Goliath).

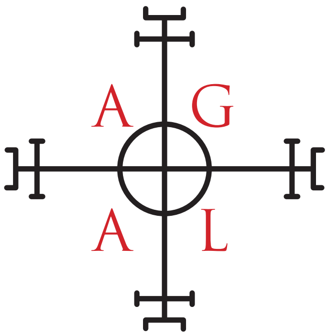
In Arabic, there is apparently even a word, related to QIN (or QVN), which means "a female minstrel"!

My source here, for the most part, is Gesenius. Don't know if he's fallen from favor, and don't particularly care. I'm also aware that I am here stating none but the most superficial of interpretations.

Obviously, there is a *lot* of meaning packed in there, but I'm sure you already knew this much.

Take care, SATYR

[Ed's note—It is intriguing, given the equivalence between Jubalcain and AGLA by gematria that Satyr has noticed, that the angel Uriel instructed Dr John Dee to inscribe on the back of the wax Sigillum Dei Æmeth a circle and cross design in which the four letters A, G, L, and A are to be written clockwise from the top left quadrant (James, *The Enochian Magick of Dr John Dee*, p 37; Tyson, *Enochian Magic for Beginners*, pp 82–83, and shown left). On July 2, 2001, I visited the British Museum to take a closer look at the Sigillum Dei Æmeth, but by the perversity of the gods it had just been removed from the glass case by the preservation department who feared that the unusually hot weather may melt the wax discs—just an empty space surrounded by the gold disc, the crystal sphere, and the Aztec obsidian dark mirror. Æmeth (אמת), Hebrew for "Truth", is said to have been the word of power used by Rabbi Loew to animate the Golem of Prague. There is a tradition that AGLA was heard by Lot, which saved him from the destruction of Sodom.]



Currents and perceptions

Many discussions have centred on magical currents. The general impression from literature and discussion is that currents exist for a while and then fade away, being replaced by another, more vital current.

In the past few decades there have been claims for the "93 current", "Ma'at current", "Lam current", the "Nu-Isis current", the "Typhonic current", the "Transplutonic current", the "Current of the Seven Rays" (emanating from the constellation Leo, no relation to the OTA [Ordo Templi Astarte—Ed]), and the "Sirius current".

In hearing Joel's description of the KAOS-BABALON current, I began to wonder if there were only one current that is apprehended by individuals at different times. To use a clumsy metaphor, explorers named the bits of North America in which they landed by a host of different names, yet it was but one land mass.

If the current of creation is a constantly evolving, constantly changing phenomenon, then any attempt to label it as the "XYZ current" is error unless it is accepted that such a current is in a state of constant evolution. This is difficult for any individual, no matter how advanced: some concepts are not as easily discarded as others.

For instance, Crowley tapped into a live current in his invocations of Babalon, as did Parsons. (Many of those who followed failed to appreciate the dynamic nature of life, and looked in the places where the current was last found.) The existence and similarity in nature of all these suggests to me the existence of one current, that has been accessed by many individuals over time, under a myriad of names.

The nature of the feminine component of this current has been discussed, attacked and censored over centuries, but it has been discussed. The nature of the male component of this current has been sadly lacking in any substantive discussion or commentary until relatively recently. Joel's views would seem to be exceptionally useful no matter how his ideas are viewed, precisely because they stimulate thought on this area.

It's far more important, in the view from here, to try and consider the nature of KAOS-BABALON than it is to discuss how KAOS should be spelt. Too many words, which almost guarantees misunderstanding. Lock and load.

RICHARD SPRIGG

Yes, I believe that the "same" (using the term loosely) current has attracted different names at different times (though the "Lam current" is an absolute joke, a current based on a lousy drawing of an alien by Crowley, I ask you!). *But*, and this I think is the important point, "the" current *progresses* and changes its nature, as does a river, same water maybe but different landscape, different terrain, different force of current too. I believe that KAOS-BABALON is THE magical current for *now*, which is not the same current as 93, for instance, but did emerge from it and left it behind, and that is the nature of its "sameness". KAOS-BABALON 156 current may well change its nature later on and that name will no longer be so relevant. I trace it out of 93 and Babalon, and possibly the Ma'at current played a part.

It's interesting in tracing routes that my own contact with Babalon came because she wrote to me asking to be put in touch with Maggie Ingalls, ie Nema, prophetess of the Ma'at current, who I had published work by in *KAOS* (after the split with Grant),

and I was myself involved in a Ma'at grouping for a period organised by Alistair Livingstone and his partner Pinki/Tanith, whose work is little known among occultists but I found highly inspiring, and contact with them did advance a lot of ideas for me and there was a mutual cross-fertilisation in "the scene" at that time. This was a five year period, 1985–89, during which I met and learnt from an extraordinary variety of very talented individuals, all of whom must be credited with adding in pieces of the puzzle that was later formulated as KAOS-BABALON 156 current. It is a pity that many Thelemites are so ignorant of these changes, interactions, and subtleties that they remain stuck in 93 as if the world did not go forward. 93 was formulated by a handful of people and now a mass of people blindly follow it, 156 was similarly formulated by a handful of people, and who knows how many will eventually follow it. I just hope they do not do so blindly and that similar talented individuals will emerge who recognise when it has changed its nature and what to do about it for the reformulation that will become necessary. Constant regurgitation of the past is not a service to the future.

JOEL

Epiphany of the few

Yes Joel, I agree with your statements on currents. That which we call a current is, in my view, a point in a process rather than a thing. By "process" I do *not* mean an orderly series of phenomena or reactions, but an ongoing change and evolution, constantly in flux.

93 was the name applied to a point in the process *at the time*. Change in the current is almost guaranteed, unless the individual using it sees past the nomenclature to the process itself, which is pretty much the nature of dynamic magick.

Such an individual will likely, at that point, either develop a revised set of symbols to describe their vision, or change their understanding of the symbols they *are* using to conform to their new views.

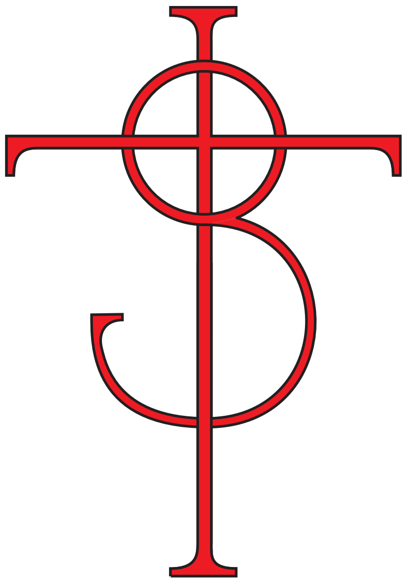
There are as few Thelemites as there ever were, methinks. There is, however, an embarrassment of Crowleyites. No surprise that a few formulated 93 and now many blindly follow it.

The epiphany of the few becomes the litany of the many. I predict that, like any living current, it will attract those who blindly follow. For every Parsons there will be a Hubbard, for every worker a thousand drones.

Future interaction with the active current, under whatever set of symbols, will be made by small groups of individuals, and the process will repeat. The "whirling forces" will continue to divide and reunite in constantly changing ways.

"Constant regurgitation of the past is not a service to the future", as you say, not for those who do the work, no. For the rest it is a comforting illusion of permanence.

RICHARD SPRIGG



“Laughing stock” danger of worshipping strange entities

by Hermann Skelder



In 1945, Aleister Crowley gave Kenneth Grant a portrait of “Lam” as “a seal of authority”, essentially a not particularly inspiring pastel drawing of the head of an alien (sorry, “præter-human intelligence”). Grant’s Typhonian OTO subsequently set up a “specialised cell” to explore the “Cult of Lam”, described as “a trans-mundane entity contacted by Aleister Crowley in the course of the Amalantrah Working”. Grant wrote about Lam here and there in his books, and eventually came to regard it as utterly embarrassing to be seen by his wife Steffi before bedtime with his Horlicks in his hand kneeling down to worship a small pastel drawing of an alien by Crowley—I mean it’s something out of a Chas Addams’ cartoon ain’t it? or maybe that makes for domestic bliss in the Grant household I dunno—so gave Lam to Michael Staley to play around with, with Steffi’s doubtless relieved approval to have the alien out the bedroom. The Curse of Lam was upon Staley.

I do not know if Staley has a regular shag, but I do know he’s 9° in the Typhonian OTO and will probably be Grant’s successor, although there is a toady in the wings who might be kissed. Staley has substantially developed the Cult of Lam the Pastel Alien (does he have a partner?). Staley, who edits the Typhonian journal *Starfire*, has stated: “The emerging Cult of Lam is of central importance to *Starfire*.” Call me cynical if you will, but over the years I have singularly failed to comprehend why a naff drawing of an

alien should inspire such earnest devotion, yet in 1989 *Starfire* published "The Lam Statement" (Vol. I, No. 3) and in 1994 Staley gave a lecture entitled "The Mysteries of Lam". He has since written the following essays in *Starfire*: "Lam: The Gateway" (I; 5, 1994); "The Lam-Serpent Sadhana" (II; 1, 1996); "Iridescent undulations and the sacred fire: The Lam-Serpent Sadhana at group level" (II; 2, 1998). Acting on channelled information Staley has given the head of Lam a serpent body and associated it with the kundalini firesnake, while at the same time denying it is synonymous with the firesnake. Whether it is synonymous with the one-eyed trousersnake has not been addressed thus far in print. Hey are there any chicks in on this, I could get hip to a swinging scene.

Current research by Staley has suggested to him that Lam was in fact Crowley's guru (email to Peter Koenig, June 2001). Such diversification born of a simple alien sketch is surely an astonishing object lesson in how one should never throw away one's lousy drawings, or, if one does, be sure to give them to Kenneth Grant, because he'll make something out of it. Even if it is only a few guys worshipping an alien-headed snake god made from papier-mâché in the backroom every Thursday afternoon when her indoors is out at bridge. Oh well, at least it's got him off the ibis sticking its beak up its ass and the huge titty octopus.

None of this tittle-tattle, however, can beat a story told to me in the Freemasons Arms the other day by a Knight of the Pelican and Eagle (18°), who heard from the horse's mouth about the shock Roger Parisious had on staying overnight with Mr and Mrs Ellic Howe:

> Roger Parisious is an American born in Ohio and educated during the late 1960s at Columbia University in New York. He was subsequently appointed as Archivist to the Yeats family at a time when he was able to meet a number of people who had known Yeats directly. He was also interested in the Golden Dawn and occult revival. He established contact with Ellic Howe and after several meetings was invited for dinner. Staying overnight he rose the next morning and found his host and his wife in an attitude of prayer before the image of a fish (which Roger interpreted as symbol of Isis rather than Christ).

So, there you have it, the renowned masonic historian and author of *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, who always denied any practical interest in the occult, in his private hours worshipped a fish with his wife. The genteel side of suburban occultism.

By contrast, no-one could doubt that Kenneth Grant is one hell of a meanass occultist. In *Nightside of Eden* Grant details a hard-nosed ritual he was doing in 1949 with Gerald Gardner and a few others evoking an extraterrestrial intelligence by circumambulating a sigil drawn on parchment by Austin Spare; there came a knock at the door interrupting

the ritual, it was an occult bookseller who declined to come up on hearing Mr Grant was present. This bookseller, and some of the others present at the ritual, according to Grant, *died under mysterious circumstances shortly afterwards* for interrupting and killing the ritual, or, if you believe Doreen Valiente's version of events in *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, no, actually, they didn't, that's a bit of a fib.

[Ed's note—The rite referred to in *Nightside of Eden* (1977) took place on the site of what is now the Centre Point tower block, London WC1, which Grant (p 124) likens to an immense penis rising up from the abortive ritual. The Post Office Tower is similarly likened by Grant to the phallus of MacGregor Mathers, whose magical workings took place in the vicinity.

Most of Michael Staley's essays on Lam from *Starfire* can be found on the Internet: http://www.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/staley.htm.

There is a 1989 photograph of Grant in *Beyond the Mauve Zone* (1999) standing in his lounge with Jeffrey D Evans in which the picture of Lam can be seen in the background in an oval frame on the wall. In this book Grant has elevated Lam, rather predictably, to the status of leader of the Greys (p 9). On pages 284 and 323 he claims that Lam was the leader of a party of aliens who crashed their spacecraft in China thousands of years ago, known as the "Dropas" in contemporary UFO folklore, a supposed crash first written about in the Soviet journal *Sputnik* in the early 1960s, which the UFO loony Hartwig Hausdorf wrote about in his 1998 book *The Chinese Roswell*. Grant's source of information on the Dropas appears to have been the awful book by Robert Charroux, *Masters of the World* (1967), which generally propounds the idea that the world is controlled by beings from Venus. Grant writes in his glossary: "Research has revealed Lam's identity as leader of the Dropas who visited Earth from outer voids." Another of Grant's favourite sources for "research" is Gerald Massey, whose massive testimony to wasted time *The Natural Genesis* (1883) I once threw across the room in a fit of disgust on reading his comparision of the supposed pronunciation of an Egyptian hieroglyph with an obscure dialect word from Norfolk.]

A brief evolution of "Mrs Paterson", witch mentor to Austin Osman Spare

by David Cantu

Did a Mrs Paterson actually exist? Let us start away from Grant, but just for a moment. The only reliable reference I find to Mrs Paterson outside of Kenneth Grant is: *From Inferno to Zos Vol. III—Michelangelo in a Teacup: Austin Osman Spare* by F W Letchford. Frank Letchford became friends with Spare in 1937. Letchford says:

> Kenneth Grant has described Mrs Paterson as an elderly colonial clairvoyant who instructed Austin in the Tarot, Ouija board and other means of occult communication. Indeed Austin mentioned the woman in vague terms to myself; she must have died before the Great War. Her portrait is said to appear in *The Focus of Life*, and in another drawing is seen as a young girl transformed into a terrifying witch. [p 147]

So apparently she *did* exist, at least in Spare's mind.

Now we move into Grant territory and a thing becomes clear. Mrs Paterson becomes a myth to work Grant's world around, a ghost from a mouldable past. I wish to make it clear that I have a high regard for Grant's world-building abilities and have found his point of view helpful in many ways, however it will be hard to find the "truth" of Mrs Paterson in Grant's work, though she shows up there in profusion. Over the years Mrs Paterson has become a link to dark Lovecraftian magick that supposedly originated with Indians of Narragansett provenance in the USA.

Paterson was supposed to be descended from Salem witches, but all of this plays a little too well into Kenneth Grant's cosmogony, not that it couldn't be true.

Grant has even uncovered a document purported to be from Paterson's covens which mentions such names as Syth Ooloo (water), Syth Odowogg (fire), Hru Syth (air), Shognigoth (earth), all from a document called "Entreating the Stones". Syth is, of course, Set.

Grant introduced Mrs Paterson in 1972 in *The Magical Revival:*

> Spare's intense interest in the more obscure aspects of sorcery sprang from his early friendship with an old colonial woman who claimed descent from a line of Salem witches that Cotton Mather had failed to exterminate. Spare always alluded to her as Mrs Paterson, and called her his "second mother". She had an extremely limited vocabulary composed mainly of fortunetellers' argot, yet she was able to define and explain the most abstract ideas much more clearly than could Spare with his large and unusual vocabulary. [p 180–181]

Paterson is seen as the source of Spare's knowledge:

> Although penniless, she would accept no payment for her fortune-telling, but insisted on the odd symbolic coin traditionally exacted as a *sacrifice fee*. Apart from her skill in divining, she was the only person Spare ever met who could materialize thoughts to visible appearance. [p 181]

Grant then goes on to talk of this "siddhi" and how Paterson was supposed to have used it on clients when words failed her to project "a clearly defined, if fleeting, image of the prophesied event".

It *is* clear that Ken Grant was painting a larger than life picture from the beginning even if Austin Spare did relate these things to him. Paterson next appears in *Cults of the Shadow*, 1975. Grant adds that:

> Spare was initiated into the vital current of ancient and creative sorcery by an aged woman named Paterson, who claimed descent [...] the formation of Spare's Cult of Zos and Kia owes much to his contact with Witch Paterson ... [p 196]

Now we come to a little technique:

> These magicians utilized human embodiments of power (shakti) which appeared—usually—in feminine form [...] in the case of Austin Spare, the Fire Snake assumed the form of Mrs Paterson, a self-confessed witch who embodied the sorceries of a cult so ancient that it was old in Egypt's infancy. [p 203]

This seems to be Grant's first real linking of Paterson to "Lovecraftian" matters. He expands on this:

> These theories have their roots in very ancient practices, some of which—in a distorted form—provided the basis of the medieval Witch Cult, covens of which flourished in New England at the time of the Salem Witch Trials at the end of the 17th century. [p 207]

This is very close to the end of the book, which he ends with:

> When the occult significance of primal symbols is fathomed at the Draconian level, the system of sorcery Spare evolved through contact with 'Witch' Paterson becomes explicable, and all magical circles, sorceries, and cults are seen as manifestations of the Shadow. [p 208]

In some ways the word Shadow later evolved into Mauve in *Beyond the Mauve Zone*. In 1980 Grant added a little to the myth in *Outside the Circles of Time.* Mrs Paterson gets a first name: Yelg. He is talking about 333 Choronzon (Yog-Sut-Thoth) creating:

> … the event act called The Beast, viz: the creative vortex in the Æther that gives rise to the manifestation of phenomena via the mechanics of atavistic resurgence. As such, the process is identical with the method of sorcery practiced by Austin Osman Spare in Zos Kia Cultus. He had derived it from his witch-mentor, Yelg Paterson. She in turn had been initiated by her Salem forebears who had spiritual rapport with disembodied American Indian sorcerers, who in times long past had established a Gate for the Great Old Ones. The number of Yelg is 48, which is that of KVKB 'a star', the 'Star of Chivan', the Beast, from the Egyptian Kheb, 'Typhon', and Khabs, 'star', thus equating the name Yelg with the Star of Typhon and the Typhon Current generally. [p 225]

An undercurrent here seems to imply more than a friendly relationship between Spare and Paterson. Spare was, of course, often known for his "love" of elderly women.

Finally in 1994 we hear about the unearthed document (Syth-Ooloo…) in *Outer Gateways*. This is later expanded on in the "fictional" novella, *Against the Light* published by Starfire Publishing in 1997.

The following extracts are from *Outer Gateways*:

> I propose here to treat of Spare's sorcery, which had its origins in the Amerindian witch cult refracted through Yelg Paterson, who claimed descent from Salem witches […]

more information has come to light concerning Yelg's spirit guide, Black Eagle. This entity was the 'control' behind several covens, two of which were directed by Yelg Paterson. She claimed that Black Eagle was of Narragansett provenance. [p 17]

… after Yelg Paterson died Black Eagle 'focussed' through Spare [p 17]

… Paterson was the link between this cult, whose votaries she knew as the 'Ancient Winds', and several writers and artists […] such as Blackwood, Rohmer, Lovecraft, Roerich … [p 17]

The coven headed by Paterson seems to have been a fluid and nomadic group. It was based in South Wales, and she is known to have evoked Black Eagle … [p 17]

Since the publication of *Images & Oracles* (1975) fresh light has been thrown upon Spare's occult affinities with the Old Ones. It is now considered probable that the name Yelga, hitherto supposed to have been the first name of Zos's 'witch-mother', Mrs Paterson, is in fact Yelder, which is not a name but a designation. Spare suffered a mild form of dyslexia which occasionally affected his speech and his writing. Examples are his mispronunciation of the name of his friend, Hannen Swaffer, as Swather, and his conviction that in illustrating (for the Bodley Head in 1911) *The Starlit Mire*, he had illuminated aphorisms composed by the philosopher Bertrand Russell when, in fact, the book had two authors, James Bertram and F Russell. [p 24]

Spare, like Crowley, sometimes dipped into erudite works on witchcraft produced by the Rev Montague Summers. In that divine's work, *The Werewolf* (1933), page 29, appears a reference to 'yelder-eyed witches'. The word 'yelder' may well be an elision of 'Ye Elder', which Spare doubtless thought applicable to the aged Mrs Paterson. However, the word suffered further erosion and came from his lips as Yelga. In consideration of Mrs Paterson's connection with the Old Ones and the Elder Gods, as focussed through Black Eagle, the applicability of the term now seems to have been singularly appropriate. What is certain is that through Mrs Paterson, Spare was first enabled to traffic with occult entities that were survivals of ancient witchcraft, and, based on his experience of them, to evolve a unique system of sorcery. [p 25]

This seems very thin to me.

Correspondence

Grant's and Letchford's versions of Austin Spare

David—Have you considered that Kenneth Grant mythologized Spare just as much as he has obviously mythologized Mrs Paterson?

As for Mrs Paterson, Spare doesn't mention her at all in his own books, which Kenneth Grant himself concedes on p 18 of *Outer Gateways*. Since Grant is unreliable from a historical perspective, if Spare does not mention Mrs Paterson save through Grant's words then it seems Frank Letchford's testimony as to the existence of Mrs Paterson is the best we have. And I note that Letchford says only that Austin mentioned her in vague terms. We could assume, given that Letchford must rely on Grant for the rather routine information that she was "an elderly colonial clairvoyant who instructed Austin in the Tarot, Ouija board and other means of occult communication", that these terms were indeed so vague that Austin may not even have mentioned her *by name* to Letchford, and that for this too he is reliant upon Grant. Spare appears to have mentioned little more to Letchford than that there was a woman in his past who was important to him in some way. Even Letchford's statement that her portrait may be in *The Focus of Life* is qualified as secondhand information: "Her portrait is said to appear in *The Focus of Life*." That doesn't make it sound like Spare ever opened up the book and said to him this is a picture I did of Mrs Paterson. Does Grant, indeed, say that her portrait appears in *The Focus of Life*? Indeed he does, in 1972 in *The Magical Revival:*

> He drew several portraits of Mrs Paterson, one of which appeared in *The Focus of Life,* published by the Morland Press in 1921. Another drawing of her by Spare recently appeared (1971) in the part-work encyclopaedia *Man, Myth and Magic*, where she is shown after having "exteriorized" herself in the form of a nubile girl. [p 181]

So it seems Letchford is probably relying on Grant for this information, relating recollections of vague things Spare mentioned to him to specific things written by

Grant. Does Spare imply in *The Focus of Life* that it contains a picture of Mrs Paterson? No he doesn't, neither the text nor the titles of the plates mention Mrs Paterson by name or give any hint that might suggest her. It appears we are reliant on Kenneth Grant's sayso that Spare said one of the nude drawings in *The Focus of Life* was of Mrs Paterson. Similarly, we have only Grant's assurance that the picture referred to in *Man, Myth and Magic* is of Mrs Paterson.

Spare published his last pre-Grant work in 1924, *Anathema of Zos*. He published nothing afterwards. He met Grant in 1947 and supposedly began work on the Zos Grimoire in 1948 and continued until his death in 1956. So he wrote nothing for 24 years after *Anathema of Zos*. Why did he begin to write again? In a footnote in the introduction to the *Book of Pleasure* Spare mentions many drawings and chapters that were left out of the book; in *Outer Gateways* Grant explains:

> Spare had intended using the illustrations but he never wrote the chapters suggested by them. Their substance, in the form of notes inspired by Yelda Paterson, was destroyed during World War II. When I got to know him, I persuaded him to reformulate the lost material. He did so, and it survives in the form of the Grimoire of Zos, parts of which I included nearly thirty years later in *Images & Oracles of Austin Osman Spare.* [p 29]

The question remains, to what extent is the Austin Osman Spare we know from the writings of Kenneth Grant a fictional product of Grant's mind? Personally, I find the portrait of Spare that emerges in Frank Letchford's book far more engaging. Take for instance this wonderful observation on Spare's home life in contrast to his earlier social pretensions and brief flirtation with an artistic salon:

> What was the attraction to this circle for a youth fresh from working class surroundings? Was he hypnotized by the charm and social courtesies? The democratic outlook, was it genuine? Would it not have been a strain on his nerves to keep up a pretence, or was he behaving in his natural manner? Certainly he must have maintained a false front on social etiquette for it was his habit to eat cake off *The Evening Standard* in later years. [p 61]

I also enjoyed a letter Spare wrote to Letchford on October 15, 1939, in which he enclosed a sigil he had drawn but noted that he was unable to say whether the sigil was "bollocks or something touching a reality greater than we know and only badly expressed, so far, in ancient Fairy Tales". [p 183]

JOEL

Joel—There is little doubt that Yelg (Ye Elder) Paterson is an evolving mythological creation of Kenneth Grant, designed to suit his cosmogony. In his years of work, we watch her evolve from a lowly fortune-teller to the leader of an ancient witch cult, trafficking with the Great Old Ones. While it can still be argued that a real thing emerges through such artists as Spare and Lovecraft, there is little doubt that Mr Grant has spun things around to his own ends. The ends of a master builder of cosmogony.

Few realized that Grant was such an expert chaos magician!

There is also little doubt that Austin Spare has been subjected to some of the same treatment. At the very least, most people's ideas of Spare have been colored by Grant's interpretation of him. Anyone looking at Spare's automatic art and early writings can sense a true connection with the "outer" but the concretization of his vague myth into a firm portrait seems to owe much to Grant's fertile imagination.

But just how well did Grant know Spare and his work? Did Spare actually sit down and "explain" his work to Grant, or has Grant interpreted it? To answer these questions we have no choice but to turn to Grant's diaries, published in *Zos Speaks*, which chronicle his activities with the "later" Spare from March 16, 1949, until Spare's death on May 15, 1956. It is pretty clear that their relationship was never as deep as Grant had always led us to believe. Often it was a matter of Spare begging for supplies and trying to get exhibitions, while Grant would egg him on about working on magick. He seemed content to be poor and have a lot of cats. Toward the end Spare started to become a bit of a burden on the Grants and they drifted apart until shortly before his death. You, of course, came to the same basic conclusion as I, man ⇒ myth ⇒ magick.

DAVID

The Illuminates of Thanateros

Hey Joel—I'm curious, what is your criticism of the IOT? I'm not interested in gossip or personality conflicts with people, I'd like to know what criticism you have of the texts they use or the structure of the group, stuff like that. I only ask because your opinions have been referred to by you and others in various texts, but I've never been clear on what those opinions actually are. And it may give me a better understanding of what you mean when you talk about chaos magick.

MIKA

My basic criticism is that most of the "defining works" of "chaos magick" lack depth. The IOT started as an organisation set up by and for people of little occult insight who had a distaste for hierarchy and real initiation. That was about it really. It got together a series of techniques that were but pale imitations of hierarchical ritual, fostered a taste for eclecticism, introduced pretend initiation, and, oddly enough, lots of people with little occult insight and imagination started raving about it, no doubt because it appeared to them to be a shortcut into the occult.

When I came along to see what all the fuss was about in 1985 I was flabbergasted that such rubbish was the basis of what had rapidly become known as "the Chaos current". Yet I also knew that this current had a true aspect and I sought to bring out that aspect and evolve it, which meant I had to dispense with what I considered to be the "glister" of the current. So, when you ask me what is my criticism of the IOT, perhaps you expect me to point out some deep ideological divide or something. No such luck, that I would have more time for, it is simply that it is shallow rubbish peddled as something deep. I wouldn't actually consider it at all worthwhile going through one of their texts to do a point-by-point critique, I dismiss it as trash.

That said, the Chaos current did actually manage to attract later on quite a few talented individuals, which was great because it meant we could get something far more interesting going, something founded on new and evolving insights and coming out of a greater understanding of the Western Magical Tradition, something profound, not just a veneer of lame anarchy sprayed over a ragbag of occult techniques with little encompassing vision of the whole of which they were a part.

It truly astonished me that anyone could find anything amazing or interesting about the vision of the occult propounded by the likes of the IOT, and yet they did, in their droves, and still do. To me it is a sad indication of the demise of the occultist. It became an accessory to a certain lifestyle that involved liking certain bands and wearing a black teeshirt and in the end I began to criticise it in Situationist terms, which seemed to go over the heads of those I was criticising. Given the Situationist perspective it was to be expected that the pop version of the Chaos current should have become well-known and widely propagated, whereas the true occult Chaos current (156) went underground.

JOEL

The call of the Cthulhu "mythos"

Joel—On Cthulhu magick—Well the actual rub is, if in some sense they are trying to invest these fictional creations with some kind of spirit life—making a kind of artificial spirit—they are certainly not making the beings according to H P Lovecraft. Besides, only a complete and total idiot would… they don't exist to grant power to mortals; they certainly don't exist to be made tools of by mortals—they want to devour and destroy… that's what they do. And really, their description by Lovecraft is the only one that counts (ok and maybe his writing children). Even those magicians who suggest investing fictional creations with "life" to be in the realms of possibility, would probably suggest that you are dependant on the form taken by the being as it is already "described in the Collective Unconscious".

If you call it Cthulhu but you describe it as a helpful spirit… well it just ain't Cthulhu. Certainly the "shoggoth" summoning spells of chaos magick don't represent the Lovecraft original; rather, just a borrowing of the name as it makes for kewl spelz. Mind you, many of these people also think that blood-sucking, undead vampires are real and that the main public view of them doesn't come from the imaginations of the creator of Varney and Bram Stoker but was rather "channelled" to them to reveal the "Truth"—as is often asserted by those who insist that Lovecraft was not the actual creator of his stories but a mere participant in an automatic writing session from "beyond the gates". Lovecraft would likely suggest that such individuals were escaped inmates from Bedlam. That vibrating sound isn't the arrival of a wandering evil from beyond the stars… it's Howard Phillip spinning in his Rhode Island grave. The beings written of in the fictional tales by Lovecraft (an admitted non-believer in magic) or bastardized for role-playing games were so totally inimical to humanity that only those possessed or insane would ever deliberately summon them, and those others who did so by accident were either dead, soul-devoured, or hopelessly mad by the end of the story. Heck even Satan himself is more approachable… for the cost of your soul. Lovecraft's Ancient Ones "used" humans merely as weak tools to inflict themselves upon the earth. They were great characters for horror stories. That's it. They certainly don't have the provenance of the majority of entities described in the grimoires, even if those beings' only claim to fame or reality may be the test of time.

Rather than playing it safe, I would suggest that the people you describe are merely time-wasting poseurs looking for another affectation to flesh out their dull middle-class lives along with dark clothing, body piercing and shishi coffee bars, rather than participating in any discovery of ultimate reality, mystical experience , or even a pursuit

of interest in an ancient practice of human society. As to "if it works it's good enough for me" well I guess that depends on how you define "it works". If those who attempt to evoke Lovecraft's fictional beings into appearance in the mirror don't run from the mirror screaming insane gibberish or soiling themselves from fear, or die on the spot, then it didn't work—you got a wrong number. Sure you may have invested some shade of your subconscious with life and named it Yog-Sohot-toddie… but it ain't "the dweller on the threshold".

PETER J SANDERSON

It's strange how the test of time works, and provenance and origins in a mystical past do matter. Hakim Bey recently wrote to me about the defamation of the Neolithic goddess Tiamat as a chaos monster by supporters of the city god Marduk in the *Enuma Elish*, showing me something I had never quite appreciated about the Babylonian Genesis, the political propaganda inherent in it to the discerning eye. What is there to say about Cthulhu, Nyarlathotep, Azathoth, and Yog-so-goth, apart from the fact that they appeared in stories by H P Lovecraft, there is simply no hidden history to discover, no mysteries concealed by time, and, as you say, the version of this childish "mythos" beloved of role-playing-game fanatics is not even anything Lovecraft would have recognised, it is the product of corporate games manufacturers and misguided fantasists looking for a crutch to make themselves appear interesting who simply cannot be convinced that the *Necronomicon* isn't real. What a waste of time that could otherwise be spent in genuine study of the occult. Such "occultists"—and, let's face it, it's not just kids, the Typhonian OTO is full of them—don't seem to be able to recognise the difference between mythology and fantasy, having confused themselves with the belief they are experiencing atavistic resurgence from the sunken necropolis at R'lyeh.

It is a mystery how this entirely false gnosis managed to take hold of so many minds. What knowledge can Cthulhu convey beyond pseudo-chaotic nihilistic self-satisfaction? Azathoth—an idiot savant deity. They have bought into a pop version of the occult, and are in bondage to an inanity—like adolescent Satanists worshipping the goat of their own rebellious youth, their heads spun into an illusion of Nyarlathotep's hellish moon glitter and ghastly midnight.

The occult is a vast enough subject without people wasting their time on make-believe. Cthulhuites I notice tend to justify their endeavour by saying that all demons and gods are make-believe. Well, yes, I can understand that point of view, but what they forget is that battles have been fought and lost and civilisations have been raised and have fallen in the belief in the deities that true occultists and mythologists choose to

make the subject of their study. In a thousand years time maybe there will be a civilization that has pledged its all in Lovecraft's deities, that perhaps has colonized planets in the name of Cthulhu, and if so then that would warrant an occultist's attention, no doubt about it. But I don't think that will happen, I think the present interest in the Lovecraft mythos is a fad and fashion that will die out having no meaning or purpose, a tribute to nihilistic glitz and nothing more.

Anton LaVey was interviewed in *MF Magazine* #3, a Heavy Metal/Pop Culture mag, it was his final interview, and was asked: "In your book, *The Satanic Rituals*, you include a ritual for Cthulhu—does this mean you find some truth in the stories of H P Lovecraft?" LaVey answered: "H P Lovecraft has a place in Satanic literature because he innovated a style beyond that of Poe, Blackwood, James, etc. The fact that his stories have had enough dramatic impact to establish a cult—without even trying—is reason enough to recognize him as a sorcerer to be reckoned with."

Now that's actually an interesting point, but really the sheer pathology of it is what's most worth examining. LaVey himself exploited this pathology, I mean what drives a person to dress up as Satan most of their adult life? Pity his poor daughter, "an otherwise charming girl everso slightly fucked up by having Satan as a dad", as Alan Moore once put it to me.

JOEL

The mystery of the *Steganographia:* demonic cryptography

***Some thoughts coming out of correspondence on the decipherment by Jim Reeds of Book III of Johannes Trithemius's* Steganographia**

The *Steganographia*, written in 1500 and published in 1606, is an intriguing work because it contains an almost an exact copy of parts of the *Lemegeton*, but the idea is that this was a blind for what was actually a book on cryptography. The implications are slightly mindboggling. So you've got a book that resembles the *Lemegeton*, the classic manual of demonic evocation, but it contains hidden cipher messages intended to show Trithemius's methods of cryptography. But why choose to disguise it as a book on demonic evocation, particularly at a time of witch-hunts? Could the hidden ciphers in the *Steganographia*

imply that other ostensibly occult texts are similarly enciphered? Many demonic incantations involve long strings of barbarous words I have often wondered about the origin of—could they contain cipher messages, just as Trithemius placed numerical ciphers, as Jim Reeds has shown, in what have the appearance of tables of astronomical data in Book III. It was thinking about this that gave me the idea of a Goetic evocation to gain the ability to read secret writings and discover all manner of hidden things, and it is telling that this is precisely a typical power that can be bestowed by certain Goetic demons. And of course cryptography is a classic demonic art anyway. Much of John Dee's angelic invocations and endless repetitive details of occult workings are believed by some cryptologists not to be angelic invocations and magical writings at all, but the use of occult as a convenient cover for Elizabethan espionage, with Dee as a spy reporting back on the affairs of the Bohemian court and suchlike. The discovery of ciphers in the *Steganographia* Book III *seems* to imply that occultists were wrong to regard Trithemius as a magician. But is it as simple as that?

JB

[Ed's note—See: Reeds, Jim. "Solved: The Ciphers in Book III of Trithemius's *Steganographia*." *Cryptologia* 22 (1998), pp 291–318. Shortly after Reeds announced his discovery he found out that Thomas Ernst had already solved the cipher and published it as "Schwarzweiße Magie. Der Schlüssel zum dritten Buch der Steganographia des Trithemius" in *Daphnis* 25:1 (1996), also published as a book, which Reeds reviewed in *Cryptologia* 23 (1999). *The New York Times* of April 14, 1998, covered the story of the two men breaking the code independently of one another. Books I and III are translated in: Tait F, Upton C. *The Steganographia of Johannes Trithemius.* Edinburgh: Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks, 1982. As an aside, the cipher used in the Golden Dawn cipher manuscript is one originated by Trithemius in *Polygraphiæ et Universelle Escriture Cabalistique*, Paris, 1561. Jim Reeds also figured out a complex hidden pattern in the magic tables of the *Book of Soyga*, a copy of which was owned by John Dee.]

Joel—Trithemius is a fascinating enigma. The fact is that *Steganographia* almost destroyed his reputation as a theologian and as a witch hunter (Trithemius was *strongly* opposed to any kind of "demonic magic"), so to disguise a treatise of cryptography as a manual of magic would make no sense in the context of the times. More importantly, Trithemius seemed to think that *Steganographia* would give the reader "instantaneous universal knowledge", à la *ars notaria*; at least he says so in a letter to his friend Arnold Bostius. And if *Steganographia* was a kind of "hoax", wouldn't he have told Cornelius Agrippa?

But on the other hand, we cannot ignore the recent deciphering of the third book. Here are my two cents (an idea which has no real value until I read myself the *Steganographia*, but the only transcription I know is on Joseph Peterson's website, and medieval Latin is too much for my stomach!): *Steganographia* is a "pure" manual of cryptography, but Trithemius saw cryptography as a sacred science, not only a collection of tricks: encoding a document became in itself a magical operation, which has therefore to be placed under the invocation of spiritual forces, or "angels". This seems to me to be quite in the spirit of Renaissance magic, which did not draw strong borders between "profane" and "magical" activities. There is, for instance, a magician (I don't remember who, perhaps Camillo or Paolini, probably somebody of this circle) who tried to apply the concepts of alchemy to rhetoric. This would give a new vision of magical activity, which, not being confined to the limits of the magic circle, would become a way to work on "profane" things with a "sacred" mindset.

REM

I certainly agree that the distinction between pure science and magic was blurred then, but if Trithemius was supposed to be strongly opposed to demonic magic why would he make his work look like a manual of demonic magic? You'd have to be phenomenally intelligent to think *Steganographia* wasn't a demonic book, because that was precisely what it looked like, so if the book was *only* a manual of cryptography and had no magical content why choose such a risky disguise? As you say, it is a strange enigma. There is of course the concept in cryptography of a false decipherment to throw people off the trail, where a bogus possible decipherment is deliberately placed, such that when people find it they give up looking for some other decipherment that is hidden deeper in the text. Jim Reeds is of course aware of such things.

Trithemius does seem in private correspondence to have written of the work in occult terms, such as in his 1499 letter to Arnoldus Bostius where he mentions that the *Steganographia* contains, besides over a hundred kinds of secret writing, a method for communicating one's thoughts by fire over a distance and other forms of telepathy. And Agrippa of Nettesheim (1486–1535) wrote in *De Occulta Philosophia*, concerning a method of conveying one's thoughts to a person far away within 24 hours: "And I know how to do this and have often done it. Abbot Trithemius also knew how to do it and used to do it." Agrippa stayed with Trithemius at his monastery and learnt from him firsthand. I need to classify exactly which demons possess the ability to teach how to read secret writings and discover hidden things, there may be some clue there, but I will do it in the *Lemegeton*, for I have a vague suspicion that the example of Trithemius

could imply that other occult manuscripts, purely occult manuscripts—such as those that ended up as the *Lemegeton*—are potentially similarly enciphered but it is not generally realised.

JOEL

Mmm… I'm not a specialist, but I'm not sure it is possible that Trithemius could be commenting on the books of the *Lemegeton*, doesn't Trithemius predate it?

Joseph Peterson, in his online edition (http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/lemegeton.htm), writes that the *Lemegeton* is a 17th century book (although based on earlier texts). And the introduction mentions "the fraternity of Rosicrucians" making this text posterior to 1600, at least.

When I read Peterson's introduction, I was under the impression that, in fact, both Trithemius and Johann Wier were two important sources for the *Lemegeton* (Trithemius inspiring *Theurgia Goetia* and *Ars Paulina*, Wier being a source for the *Goetia*).

REM

I don't think Peterson necessarily implies Trithemius inspired *Theurgia Goetia* and *Ars Paulina*, he simply points out similarities. Johann Wier's (aka Wierus) *Pseudomonarchia dæmonum*, part of his 1563 *De Præstigiis Dæmonum*, corresponds closely to *Goetia*, the first part of the *Lemegeton*. Wier doesn't have any demonic seals, and the demons are evoked by a simple conjuration, not the elaborate ritual found in the *Lemegeton*. Wier could have based his work on a manuscript *Goetia*, rather than vice versa.

Reginald Scot in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584, mentions *Ars Paulina*, *Ars Almadel*, and *Ars Notoria*, the third, fourth, and fifth parts of the *Lemegeton*, respectively. Trithemius himself mentioned the *Ars Almadel*.

Theurgia Goetia, the second part of the *Lemegeton*, has similar spirits and sigils to *Steganographia* Book I. The question is which came first. Trithemius's conjurations are actually his examples of hidden writing (ie, steganography), and do not correspond with the conjurations found in *Theurgia Goetia*, and although only a few of the demonic seals appear in *Steganographia*, these correspond exactly. This would seem to suggest that *Steganographia* Book I was based on *Theurgia Goetia*, not the other way around.

Steganographia was written in 1500, but was not published until 1606. It was, however, widely circulated in manuscript form. John Dee (1527–1608), for instance, had the *Steganographia* and mentioned commissioning another manuscript copy of it in a letter dated February 16, 1563. Dee described it as: "a boke for which many a lerned man

hath long sought and dayly yet doth seeke." Since we don't know how long the five parts of the *Lemegeton* circulated in manuscript it seems reasonable to assume that Trithemius based *Steganographia* on occult manuscripts already in circulation that later became the *Lemegeton* in the 17th century. Trithemius (1462–1516) was a Benedictine abbot who visited many monasteries collecting manuscripts, so he was certainly in a position to know about such works. His famous collection consisted of 2000 books, 800 of them manuscript, in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and other languages.

My suspicion is that Trithemius used manuscripts that already existed. The spirits in Part 1 of the *Ars Paulina* (third part of the *Lemegeton*) coincide exactly with those found in Trithemius's *Steganographia*, Book II, but I don't think this necessarily implies the *Ars Paulina* was based on *Steganographia*, because why would Reginald Scot in 1584 refer to the *Ars Paulina* rather than a manuscript of Trithemius? It would mean that the *Ars Paulina* had sprung into existence as a plagiarism of *Steganographia* in a matter of decades without anyone realising. It seems to me more reasonable to assume *Ars Paulina* already circulated in manuscript pre-1500 and Trithemius came across it and decided it suited his purposes to illustrate his theory of cryptography.

The real question then becomes: why use occult manuscripts to illustrate methods of cryptography if the manuscript did not also have an occult purpose? The mystery remains. Jim Reeds wonders whether Trithemius regarded cryptography as inherently magical, but overall suggests that he could have embraced the rhetoric of magic to illustrate his cryptographic techniques as a strategy to engage the reader's interest through example after example of tedious explanations. But the point is, if the reader is reading the text as a cryptography handbook, and not as occult text, and is aware that it is in code and is not really an occult text, then I cannot see that the book would appear any more interesting than it would if disguised as, say, a treatise on botany or geography.

In *Steganographia* Book III Reeds found what he regarded as a figurative clue to the possibility of a reversed alphabet in a simple reference to the "retrograde" motion of Saturn. But I reckon that was not necessarily a deliberately placed clue but a lucky guess on his part inspired by the word. If it was a deliberate hint, then what are we to make of the fact that of the 72 demons listed in the *Goetia* the powers of 12 of them include the ability to discover secret or hidden things: Vassago (3), Marbas (5), Barbatos (8), Paimon (9), Eligor (15), Purson (20), Shax (44), Vine (45), Procel (49), Gemory (56), Valac (62), Cimeries (66). From this one might suppose that cryptography is indeed a demonic art. This has made me wonder whether Trithemius was so interested in occult manuscripts because, as a cryptographer, he had suspected or discovered they were written in code. It's only a speculation, but if this is so it is something that presently goes unrecognised by cryptologists.

Although it has been thought that the decipherment by Jim Reeds of *Steganographia* Book III—thus showing it is a book of cryptography and not the occult treatise it purports to be—must necessarily downgrade Trithemius's position in the history of early modern magic, personally I don't think it's as clearcut as that. Trithemius was undeniably a great cryptographer, but he also had a fascination for occult manuscripts and wrote about his own work in private correspondence in such a way as to show that he believed it was not simply a work of cryptography but contained methods of magic. The book's professed purpose is to show how to use spirits to send secret messages over distances. I wonder whether, therefore, there may be some deeper level of cipher contained in his work that has something to say on the occult, and that the decipherment thus far discovered was deliberately placed to absolve him of charges of witchcraft should it have become necessary to reveal the book's supposed "key" and thus prove it a work of cryptography and nothing else.

The reputation of Trithemius as an occultist was established after the alchemist Charles de Bouelles described a visit to Trithemius in 1504 during which he saw the *Steganographia*. Bouelles asserted in a letter that was published in 1510 that Trithemius must have consorted with demons and that the book should be burned. The *Steganographia* was not published until 1606, in Frankfurt, when it appeared with another work from the same publisher in the same year called *Clavis Steganographiæ Ioannis Trithemii Abbatis Spanheimensis*, presumably written by Trithemius or one of his disciples, which explained quite straightforwardly how the ciphers of Books I and II worked, but it did not discuss Book III. The *Clavis* revealed that the demonic incantations were actually encrypted instructions for concealing a secret message. Nonetheless, the *Steganographia* was placed in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1609. Shortly thereafter various works of cryptography appeared seeking to vindicate Trithemius by explaining the cryptographic principles of the *Steganographia* and thereby acquit its author of the charge of consorting with infernal spirits. So this illustrates that a reasonable defence against an accusation of diabolism was to show a book could be deciphered into ordinary plain text, and that the purpose of the book was of an entirely different order. I suggest that the decipherment of Book III does nothing to diminish Trithemius's reputation as an occultist, it has merely brought to light a defence Trithemius could have used to acquit himself of charges of black magic. The mystery of Trithemius's ultimate purpose appears far from solved. And as for cryptographic structure in the *Book of Soyga* and in Enochian, one must suppose that what has been discovered thus far was placed there by the spirits themselves, turning back to the idea of early apparently magical cryptography as a kind of proof of the genuineness of spirit communication, rather than it being the deliberate placement of Kabbalistically inspired early cryptologists.

The last word on the intent of Trithemius must belong to the man himself, who in his introduction to Book III clearly appeals to the magician as his natural reader, and it does not sound to me he was merely creating a blind for a book that was a manual of cryptography and nothing more:

> This I did that to men of learning and men deeply engaged in the study of magic, it might, by the Grace of God, be in some degree intelligible, while on the other hand, to the thick-skinned turnip-eater (*imperitis Rapophagis*) it might for all time remain a hidden secret, and be to their dull intellects a sealed book forever.

JOEL BIROCO

The necessity for secrecy in magick

Joel—You have written that magick and occult workings should be done in absolute secrecy, that no-one should be told in advance of one's intention. A simple question from a beginner—Why?

TODD

Simple questions are both the best sorts of questions to ask and the hardest ones to answer. This I cannot answer in anything like a satisfactory way, it goes into the whole subject of the importance of secrecy in magick and knowing when to remain silent. Suffice it to say in 20 years of practising magick in the early days I bought into the idea of secrecy as being important so as not to "dilute" or "taint" what I was doing. Of course, in the early days I just accepted this as reasonable and never sought to "update" my views on it in such a way as to be able to provide an explanation to someone such as yourself to keep in line with how my other views on magick evolved and grew, so I am left clutching onto what may seem like a superstition without any intelligent way to explain the whys and wherefores of it, because they are grounded in experience. But I do know that on the one occasion when I did make the mistake of speaking of magick I planned to do I had to abandon that working because I felt it had become tainted. But it is more than a superstition. We all know of the classic example of a "native" thinking a camera can steal his soul by taking a picture of him. And I expect when you were younger, like me, you might have laughed at that native for being "uncivilised" or

something, not as sophisticated as us westerners. But, perhaps, as you gradually learnt more about shamanism you might have come to understand, as I have, that it is not simply a matter of superstition but that it goes to the very roots of, in this case, what is known as "sympathetic magic".

I remember many years ago visiting the "Witchcraft Market" (*Mercado de los Brujos*) in La Paz, Bolivia. A trail of American tourists were walking down this amazing street of stalls casually taking flash photographs with those disposable cubic flashes, which the tourists threw on the floor when used. But what none of them noticed was that the storeholders were collecting up these disposed-of flashcubes and selling them on their stalls for use in magical rites, along with other curious wares such as pretty pill-like objects and dried llama fetuses. Now, I thought to myself, on witnessing this and as a magician, what would I feel about having my disposed-of flashcube utilised in a Bolivian act of sorcery, and is this similar to the natives' belief that a camera can steal the soul? This, in a roundabout way perhaps, is me saying it's hard to explain to you the necessity of secrecy in magick, and the importance of not speaking about magick you intend to do, but that it's more than a superstition that can be dispensed with lightly.

People simply shouldn't know about what magick you intend to perform, because if they do know your sacred act is leaking away into chattering profane triviality even before it has been started. It is like trying to take a solemn oath in an atmosphere of frivolity, it loses its significance, you feel like you're pretending and you have one eye on what you're doing and the other on how it is perceived by outsiders to whom the solemnity of your act is absurd, and you try to balance the two and lose sight of the proper respect you should be according your oath and as a consequence it becomes an empty oath and years later it will just be a habit one has forgotten the meaning and purpose of and have doubtless broken anyway. Similarly, it is hard to perform successful magick if you have announced your intentions to others, they don't need to be physically present to have their eyes on you every step of the way. Had you kept it completely secret you wouldn't encounter this problem.

JOEL

Joel—For a man who felt he couldn't give a good answer, I feel you did a pretty good job.

Anyone who has had a secret, one that they just couldn't tell anyone, should at least *feel* the need for secrecy. Having such a secret creates a nearly unbearable sense of tension, and the self-possession required to keep such a secret is great.

The tension represents "energy", or "power", that must be channelled into the Work,

and not simply allowed to dissipate in casual conversation. That element of the personality that has a need to tell all it knows is motivated by a need for acceptance by and interaction with others. It is in no way a part of the motivation to do the Work, and for the sake of "one-pointedness" is *not* to be indulged.

The benefits of "self-possession" should be obvious.

SATYR

Compressing ritual workings

There is so much work, even within the better curriculums, which is more than just the ritual. I think that we get to a point where the ritual is almost a given. A friend of mine once pointed out that there comes a point where you no longer draw the pentagrams but simply "pump" them, which is to say that they appear when you call the Name associated with them. The reason the acolyte practices the rituals over and over is so that later on he can do the entire thing in his head in a matter of seconds. What used to take hours to achieve (LBRP, LBRH, LIRP, LIRH [lesser banishing and invoking rituals of pentagram and hexagram—Ed], Watchtower, 5=6 opening etc… or whatever your particular setup is) is done in a matter of minutes by evoking the situation, emotion and energies which become familiar during the years of practice. In those who have been working with this for a very long time, it may even be unconscious and can be interpreted as "that familiar feeling of having prepared the temple" when you think about doing work. The Guardian at the temple asked "Why do you seek to know?" and for those of us who remember the answer, the work can seem very clear.

It is interesting because as I wrote the first paragraph I began thinking of the Chaos Magickque material I've read concerning the "Deconstruction of Ritual" and I think perhaps this is what the fellow was referring to, not the discarding of ritual, but the ability of the "experienced" magician to "compress" the working into a smaller timeframe through experience and familiarity. Too bad the newbies cannot grok this. Well at least it filters out the nuts before they get any real power, or worse, opens up their own minds and they have to deal with the stuff inside.

Sub Umbra Alarum Tuarum Dei

GREG WOTTON

Yes, that's true about compressing workings. But it's also about understanding what you are actually doing when you ritualize rather than simply using elements just because they've been used before. I have done LBRP just once in my life, I immediately realised that it was not at all necessary (for me), yet someone like the late Gerald Suster considered that if you didn't do the LBRP practically every day you were no occultist. Many Thelemites living in the past believe the same. Such that for them it becomes the equivalent of occult aerobics with no meaning or purpose, just a slavish devotion to technique without understanding.

When Austin Spare ridiculed ritual and ceremonial magicians in *The Book of Pleasure* it was this kind of falsity and "dressing up" but not knowing why that he was actually seeking to discard. To someone who knows what they are doing a simple mudra or movement of the hand or posture will accomplish what a beginner might seek to achieve (but may not actually achieve) by following a ridiculous Watchtower ritual stepwise like a recipe from an Israel Regardie book. The essence of true magick is confident extemporisation and the ability to scale spontaneity in "dynamic moves". This comes not only from years of practice but also from understanding of the forces one is dealing with—it is not simply compression of a working but transcendence of its merely mechanistic aspects.

Many ceremonial magicians have a habit of ceremony they cannot see beyond and as a result their workings are depleted of actual magick. To me, chaos magick was about going beyond this, but as you realise there are few who associate themselves with chaos magick who understand anything of its deeper principles. Most "chaos magicians" latched onto chaos magick as a way to avoid training and hierarchy, but ended up in a non-progressive state because they hadn't realised that chaos magick is actually an *advance* on traditional magick, not simply another choice of system, but for it to be an advance *practically* it actually demands far more of you than traditional magick. That was the error they made and they show little sign of being able to recover from it.

I spent a good deal of time in the 80s pointing this out to them here in *KAOS*, and do so again now because the resurgence of the *true* Chaos current onto the Outer again is imminent after 12 years of apparently being in the doldrums. Chaos magick has always attracted more than its fair share of complete no-hopers, and I have likened this to a kind of disguise and necessary façade, the attracting beacon of the massing crowd through which those more serious about their occult work may weave their way to the centre and discover there some totally unexpected real occultists. There are people who understand the principles of magick as I expound them, but they will always be the few.

JOEL

A discussion on juxtapositional magick

HH: So grand poobah, how do you do it then? What's the big secret?

Joel Biroco: Juxtapositional magick. But essentially we're talking about things that are experiential. I gave up trying to explain my own experience as a substitute for other people's lack of experience. Don't ask me to explain it, if you want to know what it is cast a sigil—and jack off on it if you must—to understand juxtapositional magick, and then maybe one day you will and you might thank me for taking the scales off your eyes.

BPS: Hey, I was wondering if you could go into more depth. I've still got a LOT to learn, but this sounds interesting.

Joel Biroco: It is beyond words, but if you think about what the term "juxtapositional magick" *might* mean, and indeed cast a sigil to understand it (as simple as that), you will begin to glimpse things that come under the heading of juxtapositional magick. But for now: take a moment to study your room wherever you are reading this and take in the juxtapositions that are already present. Make connections, join up things, visualize a collection of objects as a one object, loosen the boundaries of objects. Notice your world and its juxtapositions. Juxtapositional magick is not something one learns overnight, it is a lifetime's work, you must realise I can't explain that to you, you must see it with your own eyes. Don't seek explanations, seek juxtapositions and study the natural placement of objects in the world. The act of noticing should be a daily task until it becomes natural, even if you have no idea what the juxtapositions mean all you have to do is notice them. Understanding comes later. Then you can learn to manipulate juxtapositions and learn to be a juxtapositional magician. Make a juxtapositional altar, which is one that grows spontaneously over time without thought and is only one day noticed as such. If you already have aptitude for this art then you will see that you have already formed a juxtapositional magick altar without even realising it. Any conscious effort to create such an altar will only destroy the possibility of producing it, so if you feel the urge to create one and can't see that you have one simply forget about creating one and concentrate on noticing juxtapositions, then in time you will see where you have created your juxtapositional altar. This is the essence of the power of juxtapositional magick, it gives method to spontaneity.

HH: Holy shit, that is one of the best things I have ever seen you type up, vague because of the nature of it, but informing… damn… that's deep… I mean really.

David Cantu: Thanks Joel, this makes sense. I guess you would have brought pattern in if you had meant to, so slap me for mentioning it.

Joel Biroco: Juxtapositional magick is my own formulation derived from many different systems of magick over many years, and certainly the Chinese concept of *li* or "pattern" feeds into that, but to mention such advanced concepts to a self-proclaimed beginner would be out of place, so I simply provided a sketch to get him going. A brief description couldn't possibly exhaust juxtapositional magick.

David Cantu: Please correct what you see wrong in this view, but the rearrangement of knowledge into symbolic systems like the Tree of Life lead magicians to see juxtapositions between elements in new ways. I know that this isn't what you mean in the present practice, but it could go to the heart of why such symbolically connective systems work. Any comments on that Joel?

Joel Biroco: Yes, and the art of "correspondences" is also equally as important in *bagua*, but although these methods do certainly relate to what I refer to as juxtapositional magick what I am really talking about here is something far more "second-nature" and tuned-in, real moving with spontaneity *without thought*. Study of trigram and qabalistic correspondences can lead to this, but in itself it lacks the sheer elegance of true juxtapositional magick, which operates in the sense of *wuwei* ("not doing", doing nothing, no effort, no purposeful action). I am talking about something far more direct than going via a symbolic filter of correspondences or resonances, or *any* kind of symbolic framework. In this sense, by juxtapositional magick I really mean *pure magick*.

Mika Kaplan: It seems like using a symbolic filter of correspondences would be a good "first step" then. One approach to the qabala (and I think Crowley discusses this somewhere…?) is that you relate everything to the Tree of Life, everything, from the grocery bill to the color car in front of you at the stop light, to the snippet of conversation you hear passing people in the street, etc… to the point that the connections become subconscious. Or maybe the correct word is unconscious. The need for the symbolic framework disappears and there is no effort involved in seeing, knowing, understanding how it all comes together.

Joel Biroco: It's not about having a pinboard. It's not about making a symbolic framework unconscious, it is about making a symbolic framework unnecessary. Correspondences are arbitrary associations, they don't "mean" anything except what you allow them to mean. We also each have our personal correspondences funded from memory and associations made in the past. Though it may not seem like it, even these connections are arbitrary; they may appear "meaningful" and we may use them to feather our nest of belongingness in the universe, but this is complete illusion. We hear magicians speak of, oh, I dunno, green for Venus, whatever, gold for Kings, whatever, all of it is completely arbitrary and meaningless. We invest in these associations because people always have. If I'm saying anything here it is that juxtapositional magick cuts free from all of this and so I categorically state: studying qabala, *bagua*, correspondences, whatever, is of no use for learning juxtapositional magick: no use whatsoever, in fact, it's a hindrance. But we will continue to hinder ourselves and our magick because that's the way we are. Juxtapositional magick is not about taking on board "ways to learn it" it's about unlearning all of what we have taken for granted so far.

David Cantu: A similar notion is touched on in *Liber Null* & *Psychonaut* when Carroll touches on coincidence, and its importance—I read this more as patterns in reality, because "coincidence" occurs on all sorts of levels.

Joel Biroco: I'm not talking about synchronicity but spontaneous ritual.

David Cantu: Is it safe to assume that juxtapositional casting involves using patterns which basically assemble themselves?

Joel Biroco: Er… sort of… but don't try to define this too soon…

David Cantu: Why, then, is an altar relevant?

Joel Biroco: It is a place of focus, a place of power, but altars can be found anywhere, this was my point.

David Cantu: Say, for example, I notice a "physical coincidence" between a bass guitar, a stereo, and a grapefruit. This "unified object" (ie, I remove perceptual boundaries between these objects) relates to a particular unwanted emotion, or desired effect.

How then does one make the leap between seeing and doing, or is there a leap at all?

Joel Biroco: No leap because no thought, just spontaneous action directed by insight. But to try to address your comment in as helpful a way as is possible, I wonder if you are one leap ahead of yourself. You are wondering how to make the leap from seeing to doing, but I wonder whether you have really made the leap between bass, stereo, grapefruit and an unwanted emotion, or whether you are positing an example hypothetically. Hypothetical situations are the antithesis of juxtapositional magick. There is no point in saying "What if…" Learn from spontaneity *itself*, from the moment *itself*, in real time. You cannot second-guess juxtapositional magick or have pre-prepared responses. It *is* ritual, but not ritual "as we know it Jim". So avoid thinking about it and trying to answer hypothetical questions about it. You can't come to an understanding of it that way.

As for feeling like a beginner… Remember that your understanding of this next week, next year, in five years time, in 10 years time, in 20 years time, will advance. Also be aware that there are many magicians who have been studying and practising more documented forms of magick for many years who know next to nothing of juxtapositional magick, to whom these ideas will be new. There are no books on this and this is the first time I have even mentioned juxtapositional magick in a public forum myself, though I have been practising this form of magick for many years. "Juxtapositional magick" is only a name I came up with for convenience, that kinda describes it, but it's the doing of it that's important, description fails dismally to convey the real power of this magick, which is why I've never attempted to write about it, it was only because I was pressed that I am doing so now. I first evolved this form of magick in experiments with Goetic evocation in the 1980s, and, just thinking about it now actually—because I really don't think about it much at all, I just do it—perhaps I was taught it by a demon… hmmm, food for thought. And, if so, it would have been on the one occasion when I "made a mistake" and permitted a demon to possess me, and, while possessed, carried out a form of magick I had never seen before. I watched myself do it, taking it all in. This is like personal revelations in real time! I'm laughing to myself, because the more I think about it the more I think that is indeed where I learnt how to do this, and yet, that's the first time I've had that realisation. Up until this moment I had believed it was something that I "kinda evolved", but no, initially I was shown it by a demon and *then* I developed it. Well I'll be!

David Cantu: You will probably disagree with this first part but read the whole thing. This *all* seems important, and the idea that other patterned forms of magick may have a root in this is interesting to me, because it gives power back to the creation of systems rather than the systems themselves, which you point out, are arbitrary. Please note the

following though. For rank beginners, the juxtaposition of ideas according to a set pattern like Kabbalah is a tool for seeing connections in the world that were, previously, invisible. Now, I am not touting any one system or systems in general, only pointing out that new ways of thinking arise from rearrangements of connected symbols (whether they be ideas or physical objects existing in space).

For me juxtapositional magick is how I create music. The compositional control is loosened so that the Universe can create through me. Each instrument is more or less channelled, and interactions, mostly "accidental", occur that Could Not Be Written Out. No compositional system can hold them, or spew them out, because each system is based on arbitrary restrictions which keep things from happening. In fact, it has been my staunch refusal to learn a musical theory that has allowed me to explore in realms no music theory can touch, so from that point of view, the system becomes a hindrance to the manifestation of willed forms. All things that come out of these systems will always be an extension of the relationships in the given system and will miss the multitude of relationships not covered by the system. The results, for me, are always more real if I abandon system constraints and just do.

Joel, you may not relate to this music analogy, but you do a type of visual art which, I bet, bears relation to this type of magick.

Joel Biroco: Oh absolutely, and I was discussing this very point with some artist friends only last night and gave a kind of spontaneous lecture on the relation between juxtapositional magick and the creation of art. The essential difference is that in magick there is a purpose in the creation of an object beyond aesthetics, in juxtapositional magick the creation of an object is the means not the end. I suspect artists may grasp the actual "doing" of juxtapositional magick more than many occultists, but not grasp the magical side of what they are doing and not know how to use that for specific magical ends. I have seen this many times in the artists' group to which I belong and often wish that occultists had this kind of talent for what is really magick, particularly in performance art, quite a few of the members including myself having an interest in performance art. One girl astonishes me every time with the sheer originality of her created objects (cutting open an apple, staining the inside with red food dye and placing a pomegranate in the cored-out centre, and stapling it back together like a Frankenstein apple which she opens up to show us, all of her objects she opens up layer by layer to show us, or she might bake silver foil spiders in Cornish pasty cases, or place a lightbulb and sunflower seeds inside a hollowed-out loaf, stoppering it with a bread brain, and her use of mold, and hair, and other found materials) and I have had conversations with her about how I identify her manner of creation of art objects as being similar to my

own approach to the creation of magical objects and the strange spontaneous processes I subject them to before they are finished, which makes use of what is to hand, and, more to the point, what is to hand is always exactly what is needed if you're in the juxtapositional-magick way of looking. The astonishing ideas one has that are simply "perfect" to create the desired magical effect, I use a lot of burning, for instance, and scorching, and soot-wafting from flames, and wood-cutting, and rubbing in of aloes wood ash, and beeswax, and use of pigments such as pyrrole red and of course blood, my own blood, and semen, and the milky sap of dandelion stems, or perhaps a moth may stray near the lamp I am working under and briefly coat the back of my hand with a touch of mothwing dust, what a find in the middle of an act of juxtapositional magick! What does that represent?! Bloody obvious! Use it! Sudden thought, are the lilacs in bloom yet, should it smell of lilacs, well let's see if they're in bloom and out I rush into the garden in the mad frenzy of juxtapositional magick, no they're not, they're not, but look at the way that centipede is moving on the stones, good god it's drawing a sigil, draw that sigil NOW! Draw it on the object in your own blood, slash your palm with a blade and draw out blood and do it now and I'm commanded so I do it! And so it goes on. THIS is juxtapositional magick! And so when I tell her like this about some of the juxtapositional magical objects I have created and the way I have created them she wonders why I never bring any of this kind of "art" along to the group, just my paintings, and of course I say: "Er, well, because that's magick, that's not art…"

This is not to say that juxtapositional magick is simply about the creation of magical objects, more it is about the *way* they are created.

Pansamsara: I'm so so glad that you have written all of this stuff. I feel like you have handed back to me something I chucked out because I was scared that I was "loosing it". What you call "juxtapositional magick" was what I initially thought "chaos magick" was about—directly working my *own* meanings. Then I just got confused by reading too much chaos literature (never quite got over the intellectualism of it all). I used to be an artist of sorts when I left school and so am familiar with frenzied moments of creation. It was stupid to try and strait-jacket those abilities like I seem to have done. Thanks Joel, now I may need never read another "how to do" book again. It's as I suspected way back. This all integrates so well with where I am at now. Well timed, thanks again.

Out-of-body experience

Joel—You stress that astral travel and out-of-body experience (OOBE) are very different. Care to expand? I thought they were the same.

TANSY

Difference between OOBE and astral travel is that with astral travel you don't get the frizzling crackling hissing popping electrical static horribly serious ripped from body sound that seems to accompany sleep paralysis one awakens too early from, because astral travel is imagination from within the body (not to say you can't "see" real things) and a dream state but OOBE is more like a crash-entry to the bardo plane.

For years I came across no mention of this very distinctive and truly appalling sound in reports, then I met a person who described exactly what I had heard and it was at that time that I distinguished in my own mind the difference between OOBE and astral travel. Since then I have come across a few other people who have heard this sound, such that I now regard it as the mark of the true OOBE. I tend to think if you haven't heard this sound but think you have had an OOBE you are more likely to be talking about lucid astral travel but were not actually outside of the body, although I wouldn't want to be dogmatic over that point. I regard OOBE of this character as a dangerous area to experiment with and feel they are best left for those spontaneous occasions when they may occur, which is not a pleasant experience, even speaking as one who has gone out of his way to experience unusual states, this I class as an area I want nothing to do with. The term OOBE I classify as describing a "bad" body exit, almost as if one has torn some delicate dimensional membrane that should not be torn.

So I tend to think anyone who talks of OOBE lightly is simply confusing it with astral travel, genuine OOBE is a traumatic experience, like finding yourself wounded on a dimensional plane beyond all human help, you cannot call for help to human society, they cannot hear you. It is utterly horrifying, with that terrible sound to keep you company, your body paralysed and you unable to animate it in any sense, you may as well be dead you cannot wake yourself from this by will alone. That is the reality of OOBE. Astral travel, by contrast, is on a par with dreaming.

That said, in my experience you can get into an OOBE reality from dream/sleep paralysis without going through the horrible pinging crackling popping sound. Something I noticed is that what appears to be a normal if extremely lucid dream can appear to collapse bringing a far greater reality, the walls of the "dream" feel just like … you know

those week-old perished party balloons that still have a bit of air in them but the surface feels clammy and no longer firm, the walls of the dream come collapsing down on you and you can actually feel a membrane just like that and it becomes hard to move, the reality is viscous. This I think is an OOBE landscape as well, and the type I find more exciting. A much better transitional state than going through the crackling pinging popping sound, though it too does have a freaky aspect. As for those who insist in a blasé fashion that the OOBE-scape is "just like physical reality", they must be confusing it with waking up and going for a piss in the middle of the night.

JOEL

[Ed's note—After I wrote the above about never seeing mentions in print of this strange pinging sound associated with OOBE, a passage was pointed out to me in Ophiel's *Art and Practice of Astral Projection*:

> As you make your FIRST ENTRANCE into these inner planes via this dream method a lot of very funny things happen, the reasons for which I will explain later. The actual change-birth-over-into-the-Etheric is often accompanied by the darndest collection of NOISES THAT YOU EVER HEARD!!!! Bangs. Thumps, Bumps, Rattles, Cracks, Voices calling out names, including your own, and even loud explosions. The queerest kind of noises that you ever heard in your whole life!!! Even when you have been warned about this, and told to expect it and what to expect, these noises are going to scare you and maybe scare you good. The noises may come each time you go over during your first projections.

Ophiel doesn't distinguish, as I have done, between OOBE and astral travel. Ophiel is a pseudonym of Edward Peach.]


Joel Biroco

The *ultimate* aim of the Ordo Templi Orientis

by Joel Biroco

In the years since Aleister Crowley's death in 1947 his magical organisation the OTO has fragmented—what was its original purpose and where is it going today?

Readers of the last issue of *Starfire*, Vol. II, No. 2, will have seen a remarkable "Official Statement" concerning the Ordo Templi Orientis. In this case, Kenneth Grant's Typhonian OTO, since unto themselves they are *the* OTO and the existence of any other OTO—about ten at the last count, although the Caliphate OTO is the only other one worth mentioning—remains largely unacknowledged. The grandiloquent statement—"Issued by the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Gnosis of the Ordo Templi Orientis this 21st day of June 1998 e.v."—to my mind read like a reorientation document towards firm Thelemic principles lest anyone think the Typhonian OTO had completely gone off the rails since plunging beyond the Mauve Zone after three decade's worth of opening up of extraterrestrial gateways through which little came but oceans of purple prose, which I concede was utterly fascinating. My eyes were therefore wide with amazement as I read the Official Statement, I had to sit down on a footstool in Watkins bookshop its heady aroma stirring romantic visions of occult world domination, and I decided in the end this is an issue I simply *must buy* for the Official Statement alone.

Grant, who is of course acutely aware of the chaos that awaits his demise within his beloved Typhonian OTO, began his statement innocently enough after the obligatory wilting Law:

> It has been considered desirable to remind prospective candidates for membership—and even some members—that 'creative occultism' is not, *per se*, the final aim of our magick, but merely its mode of operation. The present statement is therefore intended as a brief and summary blueprint of the *ultimate* aim of our Order. [p 11]

Oh dear, our Ken sounds worried. Will it all be lost no sooner than his ashes are swirling into the wild mauve yonder? They've had their brief holiday in the sun flirting with Cthulhu, trekking intrepidly down those nightside tunnels, ransacking the world's esoteric traditions for better words for "sperm", and now they must come home to Aleister Crowley's stark Thelemic Law lest they be considered by the occult historians of the future as mere heretics on a joyride and fail the Master Therion. How it must grate on Grant. For the *ultimate* aim of his Order is none other than exactly the same as the *ultimate* aim of those damned Caliphates that he—the *true heir* of Crowley—has brushed off for years as mosquitoes biting an iron bull. So it must have been a source of some amusement to him when the dastardly Herr Koenig published on the Internet (http://www.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/doc.htm) a letter supposedly written by Crowley dated November 18/19 1947 that "unexpectedly" turned up from nowhere, with no provenance presented, that ratifies Kenneth Grant in the guise of "Frater Aussik 400" as the legitimate successor of Crowley as Outer Head of the Ordo Templi Orientis. According to *Starfire*, Grant did not know about the letter, though it does "confirm a casual remark made to him at Crowley's funeral by Lady Frieda Harris concerning Crowley's last minute change of mind with regard to his successor as OHO of the OTO". In typical mystery style Grant notes:

> The document has only just now come to light, unnecessarily, as time will reveal. Will time also reveal who discovered it, where, and why it remained concealed for more than half a century? ["An Instrument of Succession", *Starfire*, Vol. II, No. 2, p 173]

Ben Fernee, proprietor of Caduceus Books and former VII° Grand Inquisitor Commander in the Caliphate OTO until he was expelled in 1999 after being accused by the Supreme Council of selling the Order's secrets—which he denied strenuously—commissioned a forensic handwriting analyst when the Grant succession letter appeared on the Internet at the end of March, 1998. The analyst, who regularly testifies in court as an expert witness in forgery cases, was 85% certain after detailed comparison with genuine samples of Aleister Crowley's handwriting that the succession letter was written by someone other than Crowley trying to impersonate his hand. One theory doing the rounds is that the letter may be an old forgery, made with Crowley's actual notepaper and seal ring for the red wax impression, and if that is the case the most likely suspect would be Lady Frieda Harris, who hated Karl Germer. In 1955 Germer proved to be the doom of Grant's official succession when he expelled him from the OTO, a decision the Typhonian OTO stress that Germer was not in a position to make, pointing to documentation where Germer admits to Grant that he is not the Outer Head of the

Order but merely in a caretaker position. Yet it was Grant's very acknowledgement of Germer as "World Head of the OTO in the Outer" in the manifesto of his New Isis Lodge, stating that Germer was in accord with its contents, that was one of the things Germer took exception to seeing as he had been told nothing of it in advance. When Germer saw the manifesto he considered it full of "outright lies" and that Grant was "sailing under false pretences" and promptly gave him the boot. The interminable details of the various claims to succession by the various OTO factions can be pored over on Koenig's website and others. More interesting, concerning the recently discovered Grant succession letter, is that I am told that in private Grant had said, before the letter on the Koenig site came to light, that at Crowley's funeral at Brighton Crematorium on December 5, 1947, Lady Frieda Harris mentioned to him that there was a *letter* making him head, although in *Starfire* this becomes an unspecified "casual remark".

Time has a lot of revealing to do it seems. After years of wisely remaining aloof from the issue of the legitimacy of his own succession, Kenneth Grant is suddenly forced by the prospect of his own death—he's now 78 (b. 1924)—to put the matter on the agenda once again, and reorientate the Order towards Thelemic orthodoxy, lest anyone be mistaken enough to suppose that they had drifted towards crepuscular reclining upon the divan of dark crystalline suzerainty mounted upon the iridescent winged beetle screaming down the corridor of the Aeons following the putrescent squid ejected from the blowhole of Dendera under the sweet sweet black sun at midnight onto the shores of Babalon's pulsating and tumescent yoni. No! Apparently that's *not* what the OTO's about after all.

So what is the *ultimate* aim of the OTO, Typhonian and Caliphate alike? Well, this is something regularly discussed around the fireside by Bill Breeze, the power-obsessed and autocratic Caliph of the Caliphate OTO, but reading it from Grant, who I thought was quite beyond mere terrestrial ambition, I have to confess I was wondering whether Cerberus was in sight for it reads well enough like a sop:

> Briefly, the plan comports the eventual dissolution of all existing terrestrial governments. For these governments will be substituted "kingdoms" administered by specially appointed "Kings" of OTO, in the Tenth Degree. The Kingdoms will, in turn, be subject to a central government directed by a "Supreme and Most Holy King" who shall be the Outer Head of the Order. The Kings will be assisted by members of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Gnosis in the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Degrees. They will prepare the way for Opening specified Outer Gateways to permit the influx of a great regenerative Magical Current.

Almost to excuse a Will to World Domination, the Official Statement adds, presumably to get over the credibility gap whereby people might think they were crackpots:

> This is a cosmic vision and we are concerned with no other terrestrial aim. When the entire Planet becomes Thelematized by the vibrations of the Typhonian Current, then only will it have been prepared for restoration to Those that once possessed it, and that originated the initial life-wave.

So let me see if I'm getting this, Grant wants to set up a world government controlled by a Supreme and Most Holy King whose task it will be, with his lesser Kings, to prepare the earth as a landing strip for extraterrestrials. Okay, that's fair enough, except for the Kings bit. And, I might add, are there no OTO Queens in this cosmic vision?

Terrestrial kingdoms controlled by the OTO is all implied by Crowley's *Book of the Law* I suppose, but not having seen it spelled out as starkly as that for some years I had forgotten how ludicrous the *ultimate* aim of the OTO actually was. Now the interesting thing to me is that the Typhonian OTO has never really been keen on this terrestrial kingship idea—hard to run a worldwide government of Holy Kings with 14 members and the spare room at your disposal—and I can't help wondering whether Grant has stated it so clearly not so much to point out the *ultimate* aim of the Typhonian OTO as the Caliphate, because this really is all they are interested in. Or maybe Grant is serious, he's put the "creative occultism" on the back boiler for a little while so he can re-establish his Order's credibility as a dynamic force that despite its lack of terrestrial lodges has not lost sight of the *ultimate* aim of the OTO.

Contrast the 1998 "Official Statement" with the 1977 "Official Statement" published in *Mezla*, the internal Typhonian OTO newsletter:

> Readers should consider the fact that all books on Crowley that appeared prior to Grant's Typhonian Trilogy reveal an almost total ignorance on the part of their authors as to the three major concerns of the *Book of the Law*. We refer to: 1) the importance of extra-terrestrial influences and the necessity for establishing proper contact with them through the magick of the New Aeon; 2) the mode of their invocation by magical means; 3) the science of the kalas (psycho-sexual emanations of fully-polarized male-female organisms) which lies at the heart of the *Book of the Law* and which is the substratum of all its teachings and the key to the curious cyphers (literary and numerical) which abound in its pages. In point of fact, no books to this day—with the exception of Grant's—treat of the most secret magick of the kalas and their use in the psycho-sexual mysteries of the 93 Current.

Nothing about "Kings of the OTO", still less of the heap, the emphasis is purely on the "creative current"—it's all extraterrestrials and bodily liquid secretions supposedly referred to in the *Book of the Law*, the view that the OTO is really all about the "secret" of the sex

magick practised in its ninth degree. (Reading Kenneth Grant's *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God* again after many years I must admit I had forgotten how blatant he had been in revealing and concealing the secret of the 9th degree. I laughed though at his straight-faced suggestion that the "higher forms of *cunnilinctus*" were performed by very advanced Tantric adepts *without physical contact*, the method being a closely guarded secret. Maybe Grant is the ultimate piss-taker. As for his apparent belief that cunnilingus is a cough mixture, I might note that the true spelling is derived from the Latin: *cunnus*, "vulva", *lingere*, "to lick" [although "linctus", a syrup-like medicine, comes from the Latin *linctus*, "a licking", so conceivably Grant could be alluding to the elixir].)

The Typhonian OTO has never been particularly terrestrial, its lodges are to be found on the astral plane in such places as the winking eye of Algol. By contrast, the Caliphate OTO is a terrestrial corporation fiercely protective of what it sees as its territory, and as such legally hindered the distribution of Mr Grant's book *Hecate's Fountain* in the States (see Michael Staley's essay "It's An Ill Wind That Bloweth…" in *Starfire* Vol. 1, No. 5 [1994]). The Caliphate forced Grant to insert a slip of paper in each copy stating that he had been expelled from the OTO in 1955 by Germer and that the Typhonian OTO had no right to speak on behalf of *the* OTO in the States. Grant wanted a right of reply but the Caliphate did not allow him to have one, and they also managed to get him to remove the OTO lamen from the book jacket on the ground that it was their official corporate logo. While writing this essay I specifically asked Bill Heidrick, Treasurer General and Ninth Degree Magus of the Caliphate OTO, about whether he felt Kenneth Grant's Typhonian OTO had the right to educate and provide direction concerning Thelema in the United States without legal interference from the Caliphate OTO. He responded to me on the Internet newsgroup alt.magick, on June 5, 2001:

> It was a disclaimer that allowed ambiguity to be set aside in some of the remarks in his books. The alternative would have been limitation of speech, something nobody wanted. This way he just included a removable notice that what he said didn't come from or bind the OTO.

Thus it is clear that had Grant not complied with their request the alternative of "limitation of speech" (a contravention of Crowley's *Liber Oz*, incidentally) would have been applied by resort to the courts.

The Caliphate OTO was founded in 1977 by Grady McMurtry (1918–1985). Peter Koenig on his "OTO phenomenon" website suggests that McMurtry took the title "Caliph", which had never previously existed in the OTO, simply because Crowley wrote to him in "Calif", the postal abbreviation for California. More seriously, Koenig also

suggests that without Jean Brayton's Solar Lodge the Caliphate OTO may never have come into existence at all (http://home.sunrise.ch/~prkoenig/manson.htm). The Solar Lodge brought the OTO into opposition with the FBI when they kept a six-year-old boy chained in a hotbox in the Mojave desert for 56 days. The *Washington Post* for October 31, 1969, carries the report: "Boy Tells of Chaining By Cultists". Charles Manson, though not formally a member of the Solar Lodge, was a visitor and was invited to Jean Brayton's parties. The complex story of the founding of the Caliphate OTO, essentially based on historical revisionism, is dealt with in detail by Herr Koenig and on the webpage mentioned above there is also an email discussion between Koenig and Heidrick on whether the present-day Caliphate OTO includes any members of the original Solar Lodge who were involved in the "boy in a hotbox" scandal.

The claim of the Caliphate OTO to be *the* OTO in the United States comes from a court case in May 1985, in California. US Army Major Grady McMurtry of Berkeley, CA, the OHO of the Caliphate OTO, and "Society Ordo Templi Orientis" under Marcello Ramos Motta from Brazil got into a legal battle, initiated by McMurtry, over trademark and copyright infringement but which turned into an unconstitutional ruling on who was the actual chartered OTO in the US (and thereby who controlled the copyright on Crowley's work). McMurtry won and, bizarrely, died the very same day. Colonel Michael Aquino of US Military Intelligence, who left Anton LaVey's Church of Satan to form the Temple of Set, watched the legal battle, and wrote this wonderfully arch comment in the *Scroll of Set* Vol. XII, No. 5 (Oct 1986):

> While sitting in the courtroom watching Judge Legge preside sternly over the slug-out, I couldn't help wondering if he had any idea he was ruling on which group had legal claim to anal sex as the supreme religious sacrament in the United States.

This is a reference to the 11th degree, which even today the OTO is still coy about admitting whether or not it is a "per vas nefundum" or "reversionist" rite. (The 11th degree or "Order of Shiraz" has now been disbanded in the Caliphate OTO by Breeze, since it implied power he felt undermined by.) But the essential point is that a terrestrial courtroom had no jurisdiction to decide in favour of one OTO grouping over another and the Caliphate OTO has used this legal decision in their own favour ever since to bolster its territorial ambitions, utterly at odds with the Great Work. The transcript of the courtroom proceedings is well worth reading, topics ranging from the 9th degree secret to the size of Mr Motta's sexual organ.

William Breeze (the "bastard linguistic mongrel" Hymenæus Beta) took over as Caliph when Grady McMurtry (Hymenæus Alpha) died in 1985, a fourth degreer who

assumed the modest title "His Most Sacred Majesty". Breeze, ironically, holds an A∴A∴ lineage from Marcello Motta. The late Ellic Howe, the occult and masonic historian, met Breeze in 1987 and wrote: "I have no reason to believe that he [Breeze] is informed about the early history of the OTO or European affairs generally." (Letter dated 7/10/87 from Howe to Koenig.)

In a 1987 essay in *Starfire* prompted by a flowchart published in *Nuit-Isis* magazine in the UK showing the Caliphate OTO to be the legitimate heirs of Aleister Crowley (odd since the magazine's publisher Chris "Mogg" Morgan aka Katon Shual was in the Typhonian OTO), Michael Staley, defending the Typhonian OTO's claim to legitimacy, said a very wise thing:

> In essence, it seems a waste of time to have to argue about the past, when what really matters is the present task of developing Thelema and radiating the 93 Current. Some people and organisations seem to see Crowley, Thelema and the OTO as glamorous museum pieces, fixed in perpetuity, to be preserved and cherished here and hereafter. According to this notion, the structure of the Order is sacrosanct, bequeathed to us by the Great Man himself. Thus they admit of no development, no innovation, no change. In short, Thelema becomes a cult of Crowley, and his personality a prime focus. Nothing could be more laughable, more pitiable, than such a notion. It is surely a grotesque distortion of Thelema, and a negation of all that Crowley strove for. Things are in a constant state of flux and flow, unless they are dead. Of course if people hide from change, it is often because they are scared of the challenge of thinking afresh, of innovation.
>
> ["The OTO After Crowley", *Starfire* Vol. I, No. 2 (1987)]

It remains to be seen whether Staley will feel the same about the extent of the innovation and fresh thinking represented by the KAOS-BABALON 156 current, which renders Thelema, 93 current, redundant. Another thing for time to reveal. In this respect, in "It's An Ill Wind That Bloweth…", Staley notes concerning the Caliphate OTO:

> They must learn to accept their true status as one amongst several *legitimate* groupings; otherwise, the course of the current will surely and justly dissolve them as hindrances to its expression.

Here is the essential point: it won't be the 93 current that dissolves the Caliphate but the 156 current. Time will reveal whether the 156 current will also dissolve the Typhonian OTO, certainly it will if they are serious about their recent turn towards terrestrial kingship, but if "creative occultism" is their prime motivation then, who knows, they might even tune into KAOS-BABALON and the 156 current as being the true magical current. Michael

Staley, despite his interest in such deadends as Lam, appears to understand this; in 1994 he wrote that the OTO is "an expression of an informing current, a current which adopts one guise after another, moving on when a particular form has outlived its usefulness". One can only hope that he also realises that the greatest challenge facing the OTO today is not to set up a network of Kingdoms under the control of a Supreme and Most Holy King but simply to understand that the OTO itself has outlived its usefulness, and is hindering the expression of the 156 current by tying up occultists in the dead 93 current.

These realisations do not seem to come easy to most Thelemites, who appear to feel threatened by the 156 current and do not recognise it as the living transmutation of the 93 current. In practice what will probably happen is that the OTO will continue as an organisation that soaks up neophytes and binds their Wills to its forlorn agenda, but gradually the talented individuals who are presently wasting their time in it will come to understand the implications of the 156 current, rise above their involvement in 93, and then either subvert the OTO or simply resign to find or create formations more conducive to the working of KAOS-BABALON.

Related matters

Kenneth Grant succession letter

The "Grant succession letter" was included in *OTO Rituals and Sex Magick* (Thame: Mandrake Press, 1999), edited by Tony Naylor with an introduction by Peter Koenig, which is curious given that Ben Fernee gave a copy of the forensic handwriting analysis he commissioned to Naylor before publication. He also gave a copy to Michael Staley before publication in *Starfire*. Neither mentioned it. One suspicious thing about the actual content of the letter is that in it "Crowley" says that Frater Saturnus (Karl Germer) is "capable only of the Office of Custodian" of the OTO, which is something that Michael Staley had written about at length prior to the letter turning up and is indeed the lynchpin of Grant's claim that Germer had no legitimate authority to expel him. I am told, however, that Staley was genuinely surprised when the "succession letter" turned up on the Internet. Even so, the content of the letter does seem too pat with current circumstances to have been written in 1947.

One theory is that the letter is a forgery that was not so much aimed at establishing Grant as OHO of the OTO but rather at pissing off Bill Breeze. Herr Koenig is known for

his obsessive dislike of Breeze and the Caliphate, the letter did show up on his site, and thus far has not said how he obtained either the image he posted or the original letter. When I emailed him asking for further information all I got back was a rather unhelpful response saying "if it is not on my website then it is not for release" followed by one of those stupid smiley faces.

Another idea is that there was indeed such a letter, and Frieda Harris saw it but did not have access to it, and so created a forgery. It might be interesting to compare her handwriting with the supposed succession letter. Whether Grant has had possession of this letter all along and only recently decided to test the water with it anonymously is perhaps one of those things that time will reveal. The other alternative is that the letter is perfectly genuine, and Crowley in his last days did in fact make Grant OHO. For all the criticism Grant receives for "perverting" Thelema and "polluting" it with Lovecraft mythos occultism, he has at least spent the time since Crowley's death engaged in magical exploration, which is more than can be said for the Caliphate OTO. [See Alan Moore's article "Beyond our Ken" in the Review section for a fond appreciation of Kenneth Grant's contribution to the world of occultism—Ed]

Ben Fernee, the Caliphate OTO, and the "Black Magus of Manchester" affair

Ben Fernee made public his expulsion from the Caliphate OTO in the spring of 1999 for supposedly selling the Order's secrets. Fernee, as a secondhand book dealer specialising in occult books, had put together a book list announcing a number of rare Crowley items from a private collection. Three items were singled out for special attention by Bill Heidrick and Soror Helena of the Caliphate Supreme Council: a handwritten variant by Crowley of *De Natura Deorum* (a secret sex magick instruction of the seventh degree) significantly different from that found in Francis King's *Secret Rituals of the OTO* and in the original manuscript at the Warburg; Koenig's book *How to Make Your Own OTO*; and an early typescript version of the fourth degree (Lodge of Perfection) with a handwritten note by Gerald Yorke saying this version of the ritual was abandoned because of objections from freemasons that it was too close to their own Royal Arch rite. On that last item, incidentally, it might be noted that the penalty in the published 4° ritual—"having my skull sawn off and my brains exposed to the searing rays of the Sun"—is a direct rip-off from freemasonry. It is the explanation of the symbolism of

the skull placed in the temple during the installation of a candidate as a member of the masonic Order of Knight Templars.

In March 1999 Fernee publicly laid open at length on the Internet the Caliphate OTO's persecution of him and stressed that he had never sold any materials obtained through his membership of the OTO, but in a post on alt.magick, May 31, 1999, he reported that he had just been expelled. Fernee's statements were a powerful indictment of the petty politics at the heart of Bill Breeze's Caliphate. In my own considered opinion, it was probably the significantly different variant of the seventh degree sex magick instruction by Crowley that they couldn't bear the thought of being available, let alone advertised for sale to all bidders by one of their own. Had they acted with the dignity befitting a magical Order pursuing the Great Work they might have just quietly purchased it themselves, as it turned out to this day they do not know what it contains nor do they know its new owner. Fernee, on the strict instructions of the private collector who was selling these items, allowed no-one to view them, regarding the information as being for the new owner alone. I might also add that a copy of Francis King's *Secret Rituals of the OTO* that I borrowed from the British Library's Boston Spa facility has an interesting pencil annotation specifically appended to *De Natura Deorum*, with no further pencil marks anywhere in the book. I considered rubbing it out, but no, it is still there, for all I know it may be of historical importance. What does it say? Now that would be telling. Ask me in the pub.

Ben Fernee was involved as the Caliphate's "Inquisitor" of David Rietti ("Frater Prospero", formerly "Fr. Thanatos") in 1995, who oldtime *KAOS* readers will remember as the pompous oaf who once threatened me with a libel suit for an attack on his good name and reputation, upon which a barrister at Gray's Inn I asked to comment said after studying the relevant documents: "It would be difficult to lower Mr Rietti's reputation further in the eyes of right thinking people." Rietti, now the "Black Magus of Manchester" and another reincarnation of John Dee (in the 80s he used to be Aleister Crowley, who himself claimed to be the reincarnation of Dee's magical partner Edward Kelly, so that posits some intriguing questions), was expelled from the Caliphate OTO along with his wife Irene Fraenkl-Rietti ("Soror Phoenix") at the end of January 1996 for a catalogue of misdemeanours hard to fathom in their entirety (frankly, I can't be bothered) but on a cursory glance at the evidence it seems to involve them garnering business for their tattoo parlour—"Tattooed Lady Body Art"—from OTO initiates (the fifth degree, in particular, requires the candidate to get tattooed). The entire transcript of Fernee's Inquisition of the Riettis is quite hilarious, particularly the first line by David Rietti, and is on the web at: http://www.mysunrise.ch/users/prkoenig/inquisition/trans.htm.

As a result of this expulsion, Rietti set up the "Ordo Templi Orientis Foundation", complete with a Panamanian registry like many a rustbucket shipping line. He announced his new OTO on April 22, 1996, on various magical newsgroups on the Internet, primarily to piss off the Caliphate OTO. The actual foundation of the OTO Foundation is quite intriguing and raised an interesting question about "hidden lineages". A mysterious magus known as "Master Scorpio" claimed to possess the "Pentalpha" authority of the Fraternitas Saturni, giving him the power to bestow upon Rietti his very own OTO, and a whole gaggle of Manchester Caliphate OTO groupies fell for it hook, line, and sinker and defected or were similarly expelled. It is said that being of the 18th degree of the Fraternitas Saturni gives one the power to create an OTO. And because few people in the occult possess the confidence to declare this a load of cobblers, lest they look like uninitiated fools, yet another OTO dangles by a slender thread of credibility. Thus David Rietti is now the Supreme and Most Holy King of the OTO Foundation, and his grand palace is c/o New Aeon Books, Manchester.

"Master Scorpio" is in fact Ralph Tegtmeier, currently a software developer in Belgium who is better known as Frater U∴D∴ (who was Frater V∴D∴ before he changed his magical name on being published in America, it wouldn't have done his sales any good on his sex magick book). Frater U∴D∴ has the rare distinction of being expelled from the German IOT (Illuminates of Thanateros)—which has the motto "…Everything is Permitted"—for "abusing his position and membership of an ultra right-wing mind-control cult" as the mild-mannered Pete Carroll put it, referring to Tegtmeier's "Ice Magic Wars" and the formation of RIOT.



Correspondence

Control of Choronzon "In Nomine Babalon"

Joel—The idea that Choronzon is controlled "In Nomine Babalon" I believe relates to a complex constellation of symbols. Chapter 49 of *Liber 333* states this explicitly, and gives Her Name as "the Seal upon the Ring that is on the Fore-finger of IT: and it is the Seal upon the Tombs of them whom She hath slain." And in the commentary, Crowley says: "Paragraph 7 explains the theological difficulty referred to above. There is only one symbol, but this symbol has many names: of those names BABALON is the holiest. It is the name referred to in *Liber Legis*, 1, 22." What precisely the "theological difficulty" might be is unclear to me at this time, but it appears that by BABALON he means that by the mark of the magistry of the Master of the Temple is Choronzon silenced, or that is one interpretation. This makes sense, at least to me. Silence is only possible for a Magister Templi, and I think somewhere it is stated that the Magister Templi is required to enter the Abyss and "master" Choronzon. It is the Silence under the Night of Pan, where the Masters sit encamped and bloodless on the Great Sea of Binah.

What really happened in Orinda that night, when three sat together at 3:33 am in the 19th Æthyr? It is a curious tale, and will be included in "the essay". Remembering what happened and why was a bit of a watershed for me, a couple of weeks back. Jones once told me that the 19th is the 10th, with a choice. There is no choice in the 10th. It's a puzzling comparison, and not obvious from Crowley's Visions, but seems to agree with my experience.

In the 19th Æthyr, I witnessed Choronzon manifest, "for real", and the only way that I made it through unscathed, even amused by the proceedings, was by virtue of an enclosed silence where I could not be touched, or affected, in any way. I was folded up into myself, and words fail me here attempting to describe it. Three of us sat in Silence, while those around us screamed, and cried, and argued incessantly, and literally physically tore at one another in fear and loathing. It only ended when they dropped of exhaustion. There was nothing one could do that would silence them. Chaos is Peace, and Crowley

goes to great lengths trying to explain the unexplainable. Their agitation and fear were *caused* by our Silence, which balanced it in a way that I simply can't explain with ease. It seems that silence is conserved, much as is energy, and nature abhors a vacuum. That's as close as I can get. It was sheer madness, and made perfect sense, all at the same time.

Whether or not this identified myself as a "Master", I suppose, is beside the point. I can only state that under the circumstances that night, I was capable of playing the part. There is more to the tale, and you shall soon enough hear the rest. I will add here that I now believe, as of my last review of the data, that whatever the rupture was that led to "The Black Lodge of Santa Cruz", it "came down" here, in Orinda, in the heart of that "madness" of the 19^{th} Æthyr.

It is with no little difficulty that I can connect this with Her Holy Name, *logically*. But that is my experience. It does seem to work, as I think you have proven for yourself. Perhaps Babalon is, in a sense, the containment vessel of all things, even Choronzon. I'm still writing on the Orinda working, and perhaps more will fall out in the process.

I am not at all surprised to hear of the influence 418 had on your experiences in 1988, "intersecting with my experience" is a perfect description of my experiences as well. When I had largely rejected Crowley (the Vision of the Demon Crowley is an apparently universal stage of progress), *The Vision and the Voice* was the only work I could not reject. Its meaning for me, even then, was just too great. So I sympathize with your being forced to re-evaluate Crowley in light of that document. 418 has had a profound impact on my life and my work. It is, in many ways, the framework of my experience and the lens through which I view matters spiritual.

I have a xerox of Tallqvist's "Maqlû" text. It was rumored to have had disruptive effects, back when I first copied it for David Jones. It's an Assyrian transcription of a Sumerian text, and contains an invocation of the god Sin (thus Jones's reason for wanting it). It is rumored to be one of the sources used for a portion of the Simonomicon. Since the "lilitu" come out of Mesopotamia, I'm wondering whether they're in that text. Little reluctant to dig it out and look, but I suspect I will. The translation is into German, and aside from a few half-remembered phrases, my Deutsch isn't that good.

I also have a musty old reprint of Forlong's *A Cyclopedia of Religions* (London, 1906). Under "Lilith" it reads, in part:

> According to Talmudists, Lilith sinned in refusing to be submissive to man, saying that she was created with Adam, and that he should not rule her. She learned the holy "name" (of Yahveh), and so obtained wings, and flew from Paradise: angels found her hovering over the Red Sea. She refused to return to Adam, and the curse on her was pronounced to be that every child she bore should die in infancy… She snares youths with amorous

> kisses, giving them pleasant dreams, but (as with Lamia, and the Succuba) they die afterwards of vain longings. Lilith became the consort of Samael and together they are "the Beast," and the producers of evil beings. She appears as the richly robed bride of this evil angel, captivating men with her sparkling eyes of love, and her beauty, and making the home unhappy. Hence she is called "the harlot," and she was the spirit of jealousy, hating Adam, and his meek consort Eve, and introducing the apple of discord. She appeared on the tree of life—as a human headed serpent—in medieval missals.

And in the article "Kabbala": "Thence came the material world, also with 10 degrees of badness or grosser Sephiroth, 1 of Chaos, 2 of Darkness, and 7 of the seven Hells. These were ruled by Samael and his consort, who together are the Beast."

Now, if this makes sense, recall that the Kabbalists also imagined them going at it under the throne. So, the throne, in a sense, is resting on "the Beast". Curiously, the tie-in, between Mesopotamia and Enochian, is the concept of "the throne", that I was researching just earlier this year. Wild.

I'm slowly putting all this together. I've traced the Lilith concept into one translation of *Zohar*, and am working on another. Her name comes from LIL, night, and is believed to be a very primitive root.

I too revisited *Liber 49*, just last week. I can't recall if I've ever "gone into" the 7th Æthyr. My journals seem silent on the matter.

Take care, SATYR

Jack Parsons' blunder on the Seventh Aire

Liber 49 mentioned above is part of *The Book of Babalon* received by Jack Parsons. In line 23 Babalon instructs Parsons: "Also seek me in the Seventh Aire." On re-reading the text I was surprised to see that Parsons had blundered in his fifth invocation by intoning in Enochian the 7th Angelic Key, which, though the 7th Call, is *not* "The Call of the Seventh Aire", as he erroneously titles it. He should have substituted DEO for LIL in the 19th Key, the Key of the 30 Aires, to access the 7th Aire or Æthyr. This seems a very basic error for someone who had been "engaged in the study and practice of Magick for seven years, and in the supervision and operation of an occult lodge for four years", as he writes of himself in the introduction to *The Book of Babalon*. In addition, the 7th Key that Parsons reproduces is also missing several words and corrupts others. In this

regard, it is curious that Michael Staley in his essay "The Babalon Working/Belovèd of Babalon" in *Starfire* I, 3 (1989), while realising that the 7th Key is corrupt in Parsons' version and correcting it for republication, did not similarly realise that it is not the Call of the 7th Aire.

In Crowley's skrying of the 7th Aire in *The Vision and the Voice* he speaks of seeing "the form of a woman like the woman in the Apocalypse, but her beauty and her radiance are such that one cannot look thereon, save with sidelong glances". There are some striking descriptions of "the lady of the Æthyr" and Crowley says the splendour of the vision is difficult to bear.

Parsons doesn't explain why he called his text *Liber 49,* but Chapter 49 in *The Book of Lies* is about Babalon and also *The Book of Babalon* has 77 verses, and 7×7 = 49.

The biography *Sex and Rockets: The Occult World of Jack Parsons* is reviewed in this issue, see p 168.

JB

From Necronomicons to Pazuzu and whirlwinds

The "Simonomicon" mentioned earlier is the popular name for the Simon *Necronomicon*, first published in 1977, which many people who get into the occult from role-playing games and comics imagine is a real grimoire, and even those who know the book was made up persist in believing it was "channelled". The Simon *Necronomicon* does, however, contain fragments from the "Maqlû" text, which is a genuine Sumerian curse text that translates as "Burning". This may account for the fact that a number of people appear to have got their fingers burnt by playing around with the "spells" in the Simon *Necronomicon*. Such people can regularly be seen asking for advice on occult newsgroups, such as this classic I saved from a teenager:

> I accidentally used the sign of Kosh to invoke the seal of the Worm that Gnaws and now my dog Sparky is dead and I need to know how to send the Worm that Gnaws back into the great abyss!

George Hiram Derby, proprietor of "Panpipes Magickal Marketplace", an occult trinkets store in Hollywood, encapsulates the manner in which the Simon *Necronomicon* was "channelled":

> It was written in a New York apartment above a now defunct landmark occult shop known as the Magickal Childe. It was authored by Herman Slater (Simon) and Larry Barnes. The idea to write it came after a night of particularly heavy boozing (El Presidente brandy). Barnes was in possession of Lovecraft's manuscripts and the two would drunkenly research them on a near daily basis so the idea to write the book was inevitable. They researched Sumerian/Babylonian religion and creation myths at the NY city library for less than a week. The story line and everything else in the book was written over peals of drunken laughter. The manuscript's final draft was presented less than two months after the idea drifted in through the drunken fog. This was one of Horrible Herman Slater's favorite stories right up to the day he died. I'm sure he wouldn't have minded me sharing it. [Comment dated 26/07/01 posted on alt.magick and alt.necronomicon]

Simon's *Necronomicon* lists as one of its sources: Tallqvist, Knut L. *Die Assyrische Beschwörungsserie Maqlû: Nach den Originalen im British Museum Herausgegeben.* Helsingfors, 1895. The Maqlû text is a collection of spells, in cuneiform characters impressed on clay tablets, found in the library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal at Nineveh. The supposed origin of the Simon *Necronomicon* is that an Eastern Orthodox bishop named Simon walked into the Magickal Childe one day claiming to have in his possession a 9th century Greek manuscript stolen from a private collection. Much to everyone's surprise the manuscript turned out to be the *Necronomicon* written about in H P Lovecraft's stories. Even William S Burroughs caught wind of it and turned up to check out the manuscript, as recollected by the illustrator Khem Caigan: "After going through the pages and a few lines of powder, he offered the comment that it was 'good shit'. He might have meant the manuscript, too—check out the 'Invocation' on page *xvii* of his *Cities of the Red Night.*"

The "George Hay" *Necronomicon* was faked by Colin Wilson and a few friends, which he admitted in an article—"*The Necronomicon*: The Origin of a Spoof"—in issue 23 of *Crypt of Cthulhu* magazine, published in 1984. Even though H P Lovecraft stated on many occasions that he invented the *Necronomicon* for use in his stories, and no pre-Lovecraft *Necronomicon* has ever been found, this was not enough to prevent Kenneth Grant and his Typhonians from insisting that he had been "trafficking" (I don't know why they always use that word) with "trans-mundane" (or that one) entities. Perhaps the epitome of what can be achieved with the *Necronomicon* was reached in *Starfire* Vol. II, No. 2, in the article by Nicholaj Frisvold: "Into the Depths of Severity and All Beauty: Some Remarks on the *Necronomicon* Gnosis", pp 73–95. Were it not for the fact that I *think* Frisvold is serious, I would have no hesitation in highly recommending this article as a brilliant parody on Lovecraft mythos occultism. On the other hand, the article in the same issue by Stephen Dziklewicz, "A Mantra for Evoking the Great Old

Ones", pp 107–122, is one of the better essays written on the subject, conveying well the essence of personal evocatory experience irrespective of whether one is evoking figments of the imagination or actual entities (some may rightly wonder: what's the difference?).

As an aside, given the use of Maqlû text fragments in the Simon *Necronomicon*, and whether that may have had some magical effect, it is interesting to consider the extent to which the 1973 film *The Exorcist* might be regarded as an evocation of the demon Pazuzu, who was not a fictional creation but an Assyrian pestilential wind demon, who according to some brings disease but others regard as protecting against disease (ironically, given the depiction in *The Exorcist*, he is a protective spirit for children since he is the enemy of the Babylonian female child-killing demon Lamastu, who appears to be similar to Lilith). The demon is particularly associated with the south-east storm wind. Pazuzu has four feathered wings, sometimes with feathered legs, the talons of an eagle, a man-like body sometimes showing the ribs, a scorpion tail, possibly lion's paws for hands, and ghoulish head, also said by some to resemble a lion. According to Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, in *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia*, Pazuzu has a snake-headed penis. In all the amulets I have seen Pazuzu has his right arm raised, elbow bent, and the left arm lowered, elbow bent or fully stretched out (contrast with the famous terracotta relief image supposedly of Lilith, flanked by two owls and standing on two lions, with both arms raised bent at the elbows). Possibly Pazuzu is synonymous with the earlier Zu bird (aka Anzu), the half-bird half-man (originally a lion-headed eagle) who nested in Inanna's Huluppu Tree with Lilith before being scared away by Gilgamesh.

According to Thorkild Jacobsen, Anzu "represented the numinous power of thunderstorms". Anzu is the Akkadian name of the Sumerian Imdugud, the lion-headed eagle who embodied the power of dense storm clouds and whose name is also used to write a word meaning "fog" or "mist". Imdugud was gigantic and could cause whirlwinds and sandstorms by the flapping of his wings, which links in with Pazuzu as a wind demon. Satyr pointed out to me that *Job* 38:1 is interesting in this regard, in that the Lord answers Job out of a whirlwind. Looking further into this theme, I notice that in *Job* 37:9, *Isaiah* 21:1, and *Zechariah* 9:14 the whirlwind comes from the south, and in *2 Kings* 2:1 Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. In *Jeremiah* 23:19 and 30:23 the Lord goes forth in a whirlwind to manifest his judgement.

It is intriguing, actually, that I should get onto Pazuzu as a result of making a few notes about Simon's *Necronomicon*, because just earlier this evening I decided I wanted to paint a picture of the Zu bird, an entity that has been on my mind for several weeks now. I planned to make up some imaginary bird because the only image I had come

across of the Zu bird was a small picture from a cylinder seal impression and it was hard to make out the details. In considering the use of genuine occult fragments in the Simonomicon I was reminded of the use of Pazuzu in *The Exorcist* and came across some excellent representations of this demon on the web. Only then did I start to wonder whether there was some connection between Pazuzu and the Zu bird.

In the "Invocation" in *Cities of the Red Night*, Burroughs described Pazuzu: "Lord of Fevers and Plagues, Dark Angel of the Four Winds with rotting genitals from which he howls through sharpened teeth over stricken cities…" This inaccurate vision is a direct lift from the Simonomicon.

Stephen Sennitt wrote an essay on Pazuzu entitled "The Demon of the South-West Wind" (on the web at: http://www.phhine.ndirect.co.uk/archives/sp_pazuzu.htm). Sennitt's error of attributing Pazuzu to the south-*west* wind as opposed to the south-east wind also appears to have been derived from the Simonomicon.

JOEL BIROCO

Back on Lilith

Hi Joel—I'm back working on the Lilith issue, as I've said. Spent most of yesterday on it, in fact, reading and scanning through Cory's *A Chaldean Account of Genesis*, and other texts, in search of possible clues (cognates of LILITh do indeed appear in the "Maqlû" text, by the way). My preliminary feeling at the moment is that she represents a "barren" female who practices magick. She seems to almost stand in relation to Babalon as does Nephthys to Isis. And from whatever angle I approach her, she appears to be intimately bound-up with the Fall. I find it telling that I experience no little difficulty with the whole concept: shouldn't have been such a "good boy" most of my life. A little more time in the "mire" of this world and a little less spent contemplating the Ineffable might have helped immensely. It's never too late, though.

Half-asleep, and more than a little strung-out, I started back into Lilith, without looking at the link you sent. Ended-up ferreting out many of the same quotes that were already available to you. But following a footnote in one of the translations I had, yielded some "new" material, and a slightly different take on the matter.

The new moon seems to have got me going again. Spent the whole day on the Lilith thing, and I append my Lilith pseudo-essay to this email. I think my analysis and conclusions stink, personally, but I quoted at length from my sources and they themselves

are pretty good. Hope it does something for you, other than sending your good self into a confused slumber.

On to your email: I was aware of the *abâbâlond* reference. It is most fortuitous I must agree. I cited the key I did as it was received by Dee and Kelly before the 19th. The angels seemed well aware of Her nature and Name.

Geoffrey James's Enochian book is indeed good, but is lacking in many respects. His Latin is weak, at times (though I'm going from memory and haven't made a recent comparison), and he doesn't seem to grasp the nature of the material accurately or thoroughly in many respects. Thus his lack of suitable explanatory texts.

There are 49 Keys, and not 19 as might appear. The "first" Key, sometimes called the "zero Key" is extracted from the "Round Table of Nalvage", and may be seen on Ben Rowe's site: http://w3.one.net/~browe/enochian.htm. It appears to express the fundamental duality of existence, and the angels told Dee not to use it, but devious creatures they were, gave it to him just the same. The "19th Key" is used for all 30 of the Æthyrs. As written, it contains the name LIL, the first Æthyr. To perform the call of any other Æthyr, simply substitute its name for that of the first.

Therefore, there are 1+18+30 = 49 Keys, total. There are other Golden Dawnish ways of getting at the Æthyrs through the Keys, but we'll get to that in due time. It has to do with how the sigils of the "Governors" are overlaid on the Great Table.

If you find yourself "hooked" on Enochian, you have my deepest sympathy. It has been many years since I was first introduced, and I am as fascinated today as I was back then. Odd as it may seem, Grady once said that you don't have to call the Enochian spirits: when you're ready, they will come for you. I don't pretend to stand in your shoes, but as an observer, it seems that with KAOS-BABALON, as it's been manifesting of late, this indeed seems to be the case for you. Hope you find this as amusing as I do.

The "cryptography as proof" angle I like. When you read some of the diaries, you will find that some of the material was received by the angels pointing out the letters on tables, copies of which Dee had constructed for this purpose. It provided sort of a double-blind. Really neat concept, that.

I had intended to append the chunks of "the Maqlû" text to this email, but it is already somewhat late, it's hotter than the hinges of hell up here in the office, and it will just have to wait. Lilith, as one of a trio of nocturnal beasties, definitely makes an appearance, in three separate passages, and the text contains an Assyrian, or I suppose an Assyrian translation of a Sumerian, charm against them. Really neat stuff. I was led to believe that these clay tablets are in fact the oldest known grimoire. Tallqvist translates them into German, the same language as his paper. As previously stated, my German isn't up to the task, but with a dictionary in one hand, I could at least get by well enough

to make a reasonable guess as to what to extract. I will send the Assyrian transliterations, the German translations, and the text of the relevant footnote, for starters, just as soon as I get them keyed-in.

Take care, my friend, SATYR

[Ed's note—Satyr's "pseudo-essay" on Lilith, entitled "Here beginneth the worke of the demonesse Lilith", has not been included in *KAOS*, but is available to interested parties from the author (satyr418@hotmail.com). I would, however, like to quote its final paragraph:

> In conclusion, I feel we may assert that Lilith is found embodied among us. She is strong and defiant, a wielder of the forces of the Tetragrammaton. An enchantress of profound beauty, she is capable of draining the life out of any who approach her (at least one who does so passively), receiving and gestating that life into fantastic and demonic forms. Sex, for her, is not for procreation, but a tool of great power for her magick, and is the sacrament of divine rapture. Though defiant, and ostensibly refusing to submit, she is, at the same time, a full physical manifestation of her Mother, Babalon, and as much the embodiment of her as any woman, and as capable of fulfilling her Holy Office. The old Rabbis may have cursed, feared, and shunned her, but among us in this latter age she may be honored among the "Magi", standing coequal with her male counterparts.

On Geoffrey James's book, Robert Turner in *Elizabethan Magic* (p 89) has pointed out his error in thinking the "8 viols of wrath" in the 9th key could have been a reference to a violin, apparently missing the allusion to the "7 vials" in *Revelation* 17:1. "Wormwood" is also mentioned in the 9th key, a clear allusion to the Apocalypse.]

Because Hers is the bed of Babalon

Just as cryptography can provide a "proof" of the genuineness of spirit communication (see the notes on the *Steganographia*), the method by which Dee and Kelly obtained Enochian attests to the angels' inclination to communicate in such a way as to rule out that the "messages" were a mere fantastic projection of the human mind, the main problem when considering "channelled material" for scholarly use. There were 2,401 letters and numbers on each 49 by 49 table, one or more tables would be used, and apparently there were 49 tables in total; some tables contained whole words rather than

letters according to Donald Laycock in *The Complete Enochian Dictionary*. (It has to be said that no single author that myself or Satyr has consulted appears to fully grasp the facts here nor relates them in a satisfactory fashion, suffice it to say that one such table is printed on p 24 of Turner's *Elizabethan Magic*, a square from *Liber Logæth*, Sloane MS. 3189, and this contains only English letters and single-digit numbers.) The angel conveyed the appropriate square on the table in a complex fashion that is not particularly clear (not simply by rank and column as Crowley and Regardie suggested). When the message was complete, it was to be rewritten backwards, it had in fact been dictated backwards. The backwards dictation continued until the first four Keys had been received, the angel then went forwards. The resultant texts were conjurations in a language vulgarly called "Enochian", originally simply "Angelic", which translated into truly profound passages such as this extract referring to Babalon (*bâbâlond*, "Harlot" [Enochian script]) evoking an image of a whore's bed as a sanctuary after a kind of cataclysm that has reduced the world to a wasteland, which accords with one of my own deep experiences with Babalon 12 years before I even knew of the existence of this passage in an Enochian conjuration:

> The reasonable creatures of Earth, or Men,
> Let them vex and weed out one another;
> And the dwelling places, let them forget their names.
> The work of man and his pomp, let them be defaced.
> His buildings, let them become caves for the beasts of the field.
> Confoundeth Her understanding with darkness.
> For why? It repenteth me I ever made Man.
> One while let Her be known, and another while a stranger,
> Because Hers is the bed of Babalon, dwelling place of him that is Fallen.

This passage is from the 19th Key, ie the Call or Key of the 30 Æthyrs. In the last line I have made a slightly different translation from usual according to my own contextual understanding. The received translation is: "Bycause she is the bed of an Harlot, and the dwelling place of him that is faln". To me this seems cockeyed, how can "she" be a "bed"?—it seems more straightforward to render it "Because Hers is the bed of Babalon". (I write more on the identity of "Him that is Fallen", Telocvovim [Enochian script], further on in *KAOS*.) Note that Crowley in the 2nd Æthyr in *The Vision and the Voice* says that the sentence "It repenteth me I ever made Man" should really be translated as "It rejoiceth me concerning the Virgin and the Man". Crowley claims Kelly didn't understand the Call and altered what the angel told him to fit his own interpretation. (On the principle that Crowley supposedly knew what the angel originally said to Kelly,

either because this was obvious in skrying the Æthyr or because Crowley claimed to be the reincarnation of Edward Kelly.) I find this a most unconvincing statement, particularly given that in *Liber LXXXIV vel Chanokh*, first published in *The Equinox* Vol. I, No. VIII (September, 1912) under a more verbose title, Crowley gives the same line as "It repenteth me that I have made Man". *The Vision and the Voice* appeared in an earlier issue, Vol. I, No. V (March, 1911), so presumably Crowley changed his mind about the line and reverted to Kelly's original.

In pondering passages such as that from the 19th Key—and recalling how it was ushered into existence by angelic dictation to Kelly, and how Aleister Crowley used this call that contains this passage in the original Enochian to skry all 30 of the Æthyrs, thereby obtaining parts of what appears to be a fragmented story about Chaos and Babalon, that later went on to draw myself and Amodali to initiate the KAOS-BABALON 156 current, and to separately inspire "The Black Lodge of Santa Cruz"—I am given to wonder what the long-term gameplan of the angels actually is. Donald Tyson believes Enochian magick is intended to bring on the Apocalypse (*Enochian Magic for Beginners* [1997] and in more detail in "The Enochian Apocalypse" in *Gnosis* 40, Summer 1996).

Tyson asks: "Were John Dee's Enochian Keys of magic intended to unleash violent occult forces that would hurl us into another age?" Tyson answers his own question in the affirmative, and has been much ridiculed by serious occultists because of it:

> I will present what I believe to be the angels' secret agenda, which they concealed from Dee: to plant among mankind the ritual working that would initiate the period of violent transformation between the present aeon and the next, commonly known as the Apocalypse.

It begs the question why Tyson would want to write a book "for beginners" on such a magick. There is no doubt, however, that there is a great deal of Apocalyptic imagery in the Keys, but the Apocalypse as Donald Tyson perceives it is essentially the doomladen version of Christianity. To me the Enochian Keys and their relation to the 156 current are about the rediscovery of one's true self through The Fall and coming to know the female stranger the Great Whore Babalon whose bed one comes to lie in and whose story is a Mystery to behold emerging in fragmentary visions throughout the Ages. It is a hidden myth the most vital broken sherds of which are deeply embedded in our own flesh from a distant past we have lost our understanding of, the confounded "dark" understanding of Babalon. How does this link in with the Apocalypse? Crowley in his *Confessions* puts it well:

> The nineteenth Key contains the text of the original curse on creation. Each phrase formulates some calamity. I had always shuddered at its horror as I recited it. But now,

> the Abyss being crossed, and all its horror faced and mastered, the words of the Key suddenly thrilled with a meaning that I had never suspected. Each curse concealed a blessing.

This accords with my own experience of Babalon, a woman of the Apocalypse of whom there is nothing good said in *The Revelation of St John the Divine*. St John "Confoundeth Her understanding with darkness". In fact, Crowley in his synopsis of the contents of *The Vision and the Voice* is even more specific about the nature of one particular blessing. He spells it out clearly in his synopsis of the 2nd Æthyr: "The Marriage of the Seer with BABALON: The understanding of the Curse, that is become a blessing. The final reward of the Magister Templi, his marriage even with Babalon Herself. The pæon thereof." In the 2nd Æthyr Crowley reports from his vision what I consider to be one of the most illuminating statements ever made concerning the nature of the Apocalypse:

> All I get is that the Apocalypse was the recension of a dozen or so totally disconnected allegories, that were pieced together, and ruthlessly planed down to make them into a connected account; and that recension was re-written and edited in the interests of Christianity, because people were complaining that Christianity could show no true spiritual knowledge, or any food for the best minds: nothing but miracles, which only deceived the most ignorant, and Theology, which only suited pedants.

Given that the KAOS-BABALON 156 current can be traced back to *The Vision and the Voice*, and beyond that to the Enochian operations of Dee and Kelly, it is also interesting to note that 156 is the number of letters in each of the four 12 by 13 Enochian Watchtowers of the Angelic or Great Table (Turner, p 56; James, p 117).

JOEL BIROCO

Impromptu review of Donald Tyson

Hi Joel—You asked me about Tyson, I assume you are referring to *Enochian Magic for Beginners*. I bought this book with great excitement, and found it rather disappointing. I really didn't care for his speculations and interpretations, though too much time has passed for me to recall the particulars as to why, nor at this date am I in a position to comment on the accuracy of the information it contains. It may be significant that thumbing through my copy I find no notes of correction.

Tyson is a little clueless regarding some particulars, which leads me to question the depth of his investigation. For instance, he is baffled why Dee would exchange the colors of the "Clothes of Passage", East and West, North and South, when he engraved Kelly's vision of the Watchtowers. The answer is simple: if one sets a crystal sphere in the center of the diagram, and views it through the sphere, the colors appear in their proper quarters. It seems to be a way of "encoding" the relationship between the "inner" and "outer" worlds. I think that this particular instance of this device is not unique in Dee's work.

The title is a bit of a misnomer, as it's a more in-depth treatment of the subject than the beginner might hope. For this reason alone I think it might be of some value to your investigations. It is not one I'd personally recommend, but by the same token I've found it very useful to read as many different books on the subject as possible as I'm sure you will agree. The only interpretation of the Enochian corpus that is of any real value is the one you build for yourself in your own head, by definition constructed piecemeal from the works of others. Hope this helps, despite my answering both yes and no.

Take care, SATYR

PS—If Tyson is correct about "The Apocalypse Working" (p 274), then the world ended shortly after dawn in Mountain View, California, on 20 June 1990, the first time I ever did a Watchtower ritual using all 18 elemental Keys, in sequence.

The Egyptian parallel: Set and Nephthys

Hi Joel—How, exactly, Lilith ties in with Babalon I'm not entirely sure. I am tempted to say that they are both the Harlot, there being similarities in the Zoharic passages I sent you with the Babylon of *Revelation*. I suspect there may have been some influence of the latter on the former, given the chronology, but it's all theory and conjecture. Now, it's fairly obvious from the text of *Revelation* that Babylon is, in fact, Rome: She sits on seven hills, the ten horns are the ten Caesars (if memory serves), etc. But this imagery comes out of a Jewish tradition, and is being recorded by (presumably) a Greek-speaking Jew. So we should expect the image to somehow trace back to Mesopotamia, along with many other aspects of Judaic theology.

I was surprised at the similarities of Samael/Lilith to Set/Nephthys, once I started reading Budge. I can't rule out at this point an Egyptian influence on the Lilith "myth".

Subtracting this hypothetical element, we are left with Lilith the Queen of the Night, in all her colorful finery, seducing males in their sleep. "The Beast" is then the "impure" male whom she rides while they dream, perhaps.

Otherwise, if we ignore the Babylonian influence, and stick with the Egyptian version of the story, our hypothetical Lilith construct "reduces" to Nephthys, "Perfection", "Death", "Corruption", "Lady of the Night", again (as Isis was Lady of the Day), the "Solve" half of the equation. Physically, Nephthys accommodates and pays homage to the Holy and prodigious ass's phallus of her brother and husband Set, by spreading her cheeks and giving it up the hard way (gotta love these Egyptians). For a pervert such as myself, it's a bit of religious iconography worthy of great reverence and no little awe.

Set was one of the greatest of the Egyptian deities, from the earliest times, and only fell from favor after the Hyksos occupation, as they somehow associated him with certain Semitic or Syrian gods (Budge says "Baal", usually rendered in Egyptian as "Bar". I must go back and look at his various mates, soon). He was apparently shown as part of a composite figure, often portrayed as a dual of Horus-Set in combination. According to Budge, he was in every respect the equal of "Heru-ur", "Horus the Elder", the flavor of Horus intended in the composition, and as such may be productively compared with the third chapter of the *Book of the Law*. Budge also notes that the sky by day was symbolized by Horus, and that of the night by Set. Though he was associated with the South, his kingdom was in the northern sky, and he is somehow associated with the constellation *Ursa Major*. When we went successfully into the 19th Æthyr that time in Orinda, CA, Set was "shown" to be the "Pole Star". This came as quite a shock to both David and myself.

Nephthys remained popular, despite her associations, even after her husband and brother Set had been demonized. Given the Jehovic directive to "be fruitful and multiply", we can imagine quite easily what the Jews would have thought of Nephthys. They generally frowned on any form of sexual activity that did not lead to popping screaming wigglers, despite their patron deity's sexual proclivities, as attested by numerous passages in the *Old Testament* about the Levites and the Qadoshim. (Aside: What do you make of the quotes from the *Old Testament* in the second chapter of the *Book of the Law*?)

Is any of this making sense? I'm just rambling along with this, hoping maybe something will strike a spark.

SATYR

PS—I've thought about your description of that table in *Enochian Sex Magick* [p 146]. From what you say, I'd expect it's part of the "Rudd" material. Alas, it is not a part of the

original corpus, but rather the attempt by a person, or persons, to map a known system onto Enochian. I was first exposed to this years ago, and rejected it for lack of evidence, and other prejudices. It appears in Pat Zalewski's *Golden Dawn Enochian Magic*.

Thanks for your Goetic notes regarding sex and demonic powers. I've often looked to them to solve such difficulties, but never availed myself of their offices. Is this a debased use of the system, do you think?

[Ed's note—The Rudd material (Harley MS. 6482 in the British Library), showing a secret tradition relating the Enochian of Dr John Dee to the demons of the *Goetia*, is presented in *A Treatise on Angel Magic* (edited by Adam McLean, Phanes Press, 1990). This Goetic connection is also mentioned in *Enochian Sex Magick* by DuQuette and Hyatt, but these authors suggest (p 32) that John Dee himself attempted to incorporate the *Goetia* into the Enochian system, for which there is no evidence. Adam McLean speculates that Dr Rudd may have come by John Dee's Enochian material via his son, the alchemist Arthur Dee, he whose famous comment about a mysterious manuscript possessed by his father contributed to the popular notion that John Dee had the Voynich manuscript before he supposedly sold it to Rudolf II of Bohemia. I've checked Dee's library catalogue, incidentally, and I couldn't find anything resembling the Voynich MS.]

Slippery steps down into the enigma of the Voynich MS.

by Joel Biroco

The allure of a strange undeciphered manuscript that has taxed the minds of medievalists and cryptographers alike and ruined at least one scholarly reputation

From time to time I go back to toying with studying the Voynich manuscript, catalogue entry #408 in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, 204 pages on vellum, the book that no-one can read. The last time I got excited about it was when Dana F Scott on the Voynich MS. mailing list said she had identified the waratah [*Telopea speciosissima*] as a "wonderful match" for folio 50^v (June 9, 2001). I was coincidentally writing about Aleister Crowley's poem in *The Book of Lies*, "Waratah-Blossoms", at the time, so Dana's message caught my attention. Crowley uses the waratah to allude to the Scarlet Woman, given that it is a brilliant scarlet flower. The waratah is indigenous to New South Wales and was known to have been first introduced into Europe by Sir James Smith in 1793. Or possibly the Dutch navigator Plesart could have brought seeds back after he explored Western Australia in 1629. So I immediately thought to myself if this identification is correct then it could have dating implications along the lines of the "O'Neill sunflower hypothesis", which suggested that the Voynich MS. must have been written after 1493 when Columbus brought the seeds to Europe, thus ruling out Roger Bacon as the supposed author (the plant depicted on folio 93^r looks like the sunflower—see *Speculum* 19 [1944]). But on turning to folio 50^v I was crestfallen, alas the flower wasn't scarlet! A wonderful match, except in colour. It was blue. Dana had been working from a black and white copy and had been premature. But rather than let go of the idea immediately, I found myself indulging the most bizarre speculation that maybe the plant had been painted in an ink that reacted to acid and alkali like litmas paper, blue in alkali but red in acid. After all, those art historians who argued on the whys and wherefores of Van Gogh's strange choice of yellow for his

sunflowers didn't have an ounce of chemistry sense between them, otherwise it would have been obvious to them that the pigment chosen by Van Gogh was originally sunflower yellow but went that strange colour it is today as a result of a reaction caused by atmospheric pollution. Examining my theory of the Voynich ink changing colour the next day, however, I recalled how one should really tie oneself to the mast to protect oneself from the manuscript's Siren call drawing scholars onto the rocks.

At one time I felt the key to solving the mystery of the Voynich MS. lay in its astronomical diagrams. Not in the other-worldly plants illustrated alongside the (supposedly) encrypted text. For these weird botanical specimens resist identification with a peculiar tenacity, while yet resembling specific plants in the more fluid spaces of memory and dream. When I first began to look at the manuscript I noticed a plant I recognised but couldn't remember its name. That night I awoke from a dream shouting aloud: "It's a white campion!" It seemed like a revelation, yet it was only remembering a flower, but ever since then I have been fascinated by the manuscript's power to excite wonder and offer small breakthroughs while forever withholding almost everything. I think I would go mad with frustration had I not learnt to tear myself away from it after too much sustained interest. I eventually gave up on the flowers and turned to the star charts. On one of the folios is a diagram showing what seems like an unmistakable depiction of the juxtaposition of the bright star Aldebaran with the Pleiades, which was pointed out suggestively by Bradley E Schaefer in *Sky and Telescope* magazine in its November 2000 issue, not the first time the magazine has taken an interest in the manuscript's astronomy section. As if to form a fortuitous Rosetta stone, the stars are labelled in the same strange script as the rest of the MS. By gathering all the names of Aldebaran and the Pleiades in all plausible languages this labelled star configuration could be used as a key to open up the door to the Voynich cipher, to this day unbroken. That's assuming the text is enciphered, for even that most basic assumption is to my mind a likely fallacy.

Whenever one is foolhardy enough to allow the fascination with the Voynich MS. to grow—before wresting oneself away once more (some never do)—the questions keep piling up: what are these curious plants, where do they grow? Are they real plants strangely drawn, or imaginary plants? Why are star charts in what could be a book of botany, or even plant consciousness, according to one theory. Why the cartoons of rotund women in bath barrels, and girls going down waterslides (folio 75^{r}), with each nipple delicately dotted? Early balneological treatises—scientific studies of bathing and mineral springs—do exist, but in the Voynich MS. the cartoons seem just a little Larsen's *Far Side* and the esoteric plumbing systems like something from Dr Seuss. And while it was common to draw a heroic human face on the sun in medieval manuscripts, the

versions of this tradition in the Voynich MS. have hilarious silly expressions on their faces. Of course, and this is where the trickster edge is introduced, it could be an ingenious hoax, either perpetrated by Wilfred Voynich, who discovered the MS. in an Italian Jesuit seminary in 1912, or a medieval demon-possessed jester. And then there is the argument that the manuscript, if a hoax, automatically by its complexity and strangeness falls into the category of art, or a fantastic madness—with the further consideration that the MS. is not actually an encryption of some other language but rather a language in its own right, written fluently in fast-flowing ink without a single cross-out or alteration. Perhaps its author was possessed, and a solipsistic language, an idiolect, spewed onto the pages.

The first claim of decipherment of the Voynich MS. came in lectures given in April 1921 in Pennsylvania by Professor William Romaine Newbold, who died in 1926 leaving extensive notes and draft chapters which were published posthumously. (W R Newbold, *The Cipher of Roger Bacon*. Edited by R G Kent, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1928.) Newbold's ideas, though initially gaining enthusiastic supporters, were soon decried and debunked. Nonetheless, Newbold had a seductive theory, still of appeal to the student of crazy theories. He said the book was the *magnum opus* of the 13th century eccentric scientific genius and friar Roger Bacon who encrypted his ownership of inventions not yet invented. Bacon had seen cell nuclei and spermatozoa with his microscope and drawn them, he had seen spiral nebulæ with his telescope and drawn them. It is never quite explained why he drew lots of naked ladies all over his scientific notebook. Yet Newbold honestly admitted on one of his pages, in passing as if it wasn't particularly important, that he frequently found it "impossible to read the same text twice in exactly the same way". It is surprising that Newbold did not find this telling, and go on to consider that his difficulty in being able to read the same text twice in the same way could be accounted for by the idea that what he was seeing had no objective existence.

Newbold began as a respected scholar of medieval philosophy and gifted classicist, and ended up spending the last eight years of his life on an obsessive and lunatic pursuit screwing up his eyes to read the manuscript into the early hours of the morning by a storm lantern. I was aghast as I read his description of the method by which he came by his deciphered revelations. In all scholarly earnestness, Newbold said that each letter of the strange script, if viewed under a powerful magnifying glass, was actually composed of about 20 other tiny letters, and that it was out of these tiny letters he was forming words and reading the text, seeing mainly a language based on ancient Greek shorthand but which was capable of metamorphosis into other formations and interpretations. But Newbold didn't stop there, having discovered that the text concealed Bacon's use of his own invented compound microscope Newbold had an idea:

> *Deception* is the keynote of the whole. Nothing is what it seems to be. His beautifully written characters are all shams. They look like *a*, *s*, *m*, *n*, and so on, but they are nothing of the kind. Nearly every one is built up with amazing skill and ingenuity out of microscopic shorthand characters. He was the only man on earth possessed of a good microscope, and he relies upon it as part of his apparatus of concealment. I have long known the fact that his letters were built up out of significant elements and had been using an ordinary reading glass to help resolve them, but only about four months ago, when it occurred to me to turn a pretty strong microscope upon them, did I discover that nearly all the letters which I had been taking as wholes were really perfect nests of tiny characters.

It never seemed to have occurred to him that this was simply the way the pigmented ink had cracked with age on the vellum parchment. The feasibility of meticulously writing microscopic shorthand signs such that they built up into letters, words, and sentences that have every appearance of otherwise being fast-flowing freehand strokes in another language is not something Newbold addressed, so convinced was he he was right.

Newbold read all sorts of things into the MS., and spared no effort to understand it, he thought nothing of learning Catalan to resolve a small point. As a boy he had been thrilled by Sir Henry Layard's *Nineveh and Its Remains*, and copied a cuneiform text by impressing a clay tablet with a stylus. He baked the tablet in the oven and buried it, amusing himself with the thought that one day it might be dug up and lead some scholar to propose the Assyrian conquest of New Jersey. It's hard not to like and even admire Newbold for the enthusiasm he brought to his task and to think of something that is never mentioned by those who see in Newbold only a tragic misguided figure: the sheer joy he must have felt to believe he had cracked the Voynich manuscript, that he was really onto something, a delusion that sustained him and held him fast in a fascination for years until his death. His descriptions of the folios are fully given over to the boundless eccentricity one might expect on realising that the researcher has tipped over into genuine madness and left his critical faculties behind. The Voynich MS. became for Newbold a skrying mirror capable of drawing out subconscious imaginings he then projected onto the otherwise unintelligible words and in the end he could, quite literally, read the text. Who is to say that this is not the method? Might one by skrying the manuscript as intently as one might peer into a crystal globe or Aztec obsidian mirror come to be able to read it? The difficulty is in knowing for certain whether what one has seen is actually there.

Is to understand Voynich 408 necessarily going to be a descent into madness? There are demons in the *Goetia* that may be evoked to teach a student how to unencrypt

ciphers or read unknown languages; to an occultist this would be the most obvious and potentially fruitful place to start. Certainly I myself have definitely gained glimpses after visualising the Seal of Asmoday over the mysterious folios. When I have spent too long poring over the Voynich MS., building up over merged days of sustained study with too little sleep, so utterly absorbed that in the end only my computer knows what day it is, I have noticed myself slipping into reading passages with perfect fluency only to have the letters cover themselves over again with a thick dust of mystery. What I have just read vanishes even from consciousness, all that remains is a difficult memory of the intensity with which the manuscript can interact with the mind, inducing a kind of academic glossolalia that yields up shifting sands of meaning that slips through your fingers and away. Am I reading what's there, or just lost in a stream of consciousness that has somehow been sparked by some chance resemblance on the page, and this flow of usually vivid imagery in my mind is simply overlaying the mechanical act of appearing to read words and sentences but which still remain unintelligible. Any clear understanding from an altered state of consciousness is rarely clear with the return of rationality, and the task of disentangling valid insights from distortions of the senses in the end seems much like sorting the wheat from the chaff only to discover in retrospect that you have merely sorted the chaff into two piles by the most labour-intensive method. The Voynich MS. is a scholar's *koan*.

And as Robert Firth pointed out, there is another and far simpler reason why the manuscript is devoid of corrections without needing to posit the writer's extreme familiarity with the language: because "there is no meaning to correct, merely lucrative gibberish to be generated as rapidly as possible." By "lucrative" I assume Firth is referring to the fact that Rudolf II is supposed to have paid 600 gold ducats for it.

On a tangential point, *Zen in the Art of Calligraphy* has some interesting electron microscope photographs comparing the calligraphy of acknowledged Japanese masters with their forgers, the masters' ink particles were regularly ordered and vibrant, full of *bokki*, whereas those of the fakes were lacklustre and disordered. Having practised Chinese calligraphic techniques and never attained a great standard in it, I was surprised on looking at my own English handwriting in ordinary blue biro under a 20× dissecting microscope that what I regarded as my usual scrawl looked extraordinarily beautiful, possessing many of the finer features of good Chinese calligraphy that were simply not apparent to me as written. This is a good example of *wuwei*, "not doing", in art. What I had formally been attempting to transfer from my hand to the paper, but could rarely achieve to my satisfaction with Chinese characters—because I was trying too hard—was in the end done best quite spontaneously without intention and without even my conscious knowledge in ordinary dashed-off handwriting. And once I realised this I

noticed the quality of line that I had been looking to achieve had already appeared in paintings and drawings without me being fully aware of it, and was visible without magnification once I could recognise what I was looking for in a different form than I had expected. As with martial arts and Zen, progress with practice is always forthcoming, but not always apparent in the areas one looks for it and expects it to be.

[Ed's note—Scans from the Voynich MS. can be viewed at the Beinecke Library website (search on "Voynich 408"): http://highway49.library.yale.edu/photonegatives/]

Correspondence

"The Two Buttocks"

Hi Satyr—Babylon in *Revelation* may well be Rome, but John talks of two Babylons, one the whore, two the city he compares to the whore. So the "Babylon is Rome" school of interpretation isn't particularly relevant to us because Babylon is still our Whore and whatever her antecedence may be. Hmm, is *Revelation* the first mention of her? I had assumed Babylonian texts mentioned her but just realize I don't know.

Robert Graves and Raphael Patai note in *Hebrew Myths* that Asmodeus and other demons were born of sexual union between Adam and Lilith and another like her named Naamah, Tubal Cain's sister. If so, a connection to *Goetia*? I suspect your impression of Lilith has become hopelessly influenced by the *Zohar*. Understandable. I think we need to look beyond *Revelation* for Babalon and beyond the *Zohar* for Lilith.

Saw today that the chief librarian of the Warburg, W F Ryan, whose specialty is magic, has published a massive tome on magic in Russia—*The Bathhouse at Midnight*. I once saw him interject in a discussion concerning the power of iron to inhibit magic, he mentioned how Solomon's temple was built by a rock-cutting worm because iron tools could not be brought to what was essentially a magical building project. A rock-cutting worm! I'd never heard that! Great lecture at the Warburg once on Arabic lunar mansion astrology, I learnt they have a constellation named "The Two Buttocks". I thought once of doing an MA there in Renaissance magic, but a prerequisite was fluency in Latin. Extremely attractive woman at a lecture doing a thesis on ancient images of women with their legs chopped off or kneeling in submission and arms tied behind their backs, she was the one who asked a question about iron in relation to magic. Ah, to be closeted away writing books in the Warburg, a bit dusty, a bit high-brow, but I always enjoy my trips there and feel this is a library arranged how I myself would arrange a library, and the occult section is real Boris Balkan.

I am wondering what the large numbers in the Keys are supposed to be, and I also find their translations unconvincing. Now I note a 2-digit number is represented by a

two-letter word, 4 by 4, 5 by 5, although Key 16 in James has a three digit number but a four-letter word, but this appears to be an error. Not only does the meaning of these numbers in the textual passages make no sense, I have to wonder, for instance, if *darg* = 6739, then what word would represent 6738 and 6740, not to mention how one might count from 1 to 6739. If d-a-r-g = 6-7-3-9, how come d-â-o-x = 5-6-7-8? It makes no sense to me. What is the current thinking on these numbers?

Interestingly enough, doing a web-search on "telocvovim" I came across many references to a black metal band from Finland called "Enochian Crescent", who have released three albums with the word in: "Telocvovim", "Babalon Patralx De Telocvovim", and "Omega Telocvovim". That second one is "Babalon Rock of Telocvovim" (the word *patralx* [Enochian script] occurs in the 10th Key, but of course they've made up their own Enochian phrase).

Although there is an Enochian word *Luciftian* ([Enochian script]) meaning "ornaments of brightness" (7th Key) and *Lucíftîas* ([Enochian script]), "brightness", nonetheless Telecvovim does seem to be Lucifer. As for whether Lucifer is Chaos, given Telocvovim's conjoining with Babalon… Curious too that one of the Enochian words for "God" is *Mad* ([Enochian script]).

Some other Enochian words strike me that they may be the names of individual beings:

Jaida: "The Highest" (Key 1) or *Iaida* (last word of Key 1 and also last word of Keys 11 to 18).

Ja-í-don: "All Powerful" (Key 2) or *Iaidon Ioiad:* "Him that Liveth Forever" (Key 2, final word).

Iehúsoz: "His Mercies" (Key 3).

Q-có-casb: "Content of Time" (Key 5).

Jad-oiás-mômar: "Him that is, was, and shall be crowned" (Key 8) or *Iad-I-as-momar*. This was the first after Babalon (Keys 6 and 19) and Telocvovim (19) to strike me as a potential name.

Idoigo: "Him that sitteth on the Holy Throne" (Key 19).

These are just guesses on a preliminary sortie. There may be others, I'd need to examine how the sense of the Keys is changed by regarding these and other words as names. But you see how I'm looking at it even if the particulars aren't sorted. Does a concordance exist, or will I need to make one? [Ed's note—A concordance was found at: http://freepages.misc.rootsweb.com/~cgb143/index.html] I didn't intend to choose mainly the ones beginning with an "i" (*Iad* is another word for God), but it's interesting it turned out that way.

I note that the 8th Key mentions the "Third Heaven" (*pirípson*, [Enochian script]). This is really curious, because one of the main literary mentions of this rare phrase is in *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*. Enoch describes the Third Heaven:

> And I saw all the sweet-flowering trees and beheld their fruits, which were sweet-smelling, and all the foods borne by them. And in the midst of the trees that of Life, in that place whereon the Lord rests, when he goes up into paradise; and this tree is of ineffable goodness and fragrance, and adorned more than every existing thing; and on all sides it is in form gold-looking and vermilion and fire-like and covers all, and it has produce from all fruits.

In the Bible this term appears in *II Corinthians* 12:2, where we find Paul the Apostle describing probably his own experience of being "caught up in the third heaven". From the context of the passage the Third Heaven appears to be synonymous with paradise. Dante uses the phrase in canto VIII of the Divine Comedy, *Paradiso*. Other than these references, the notion of the Third Heaven hardly appears anywhere, so it is interesting seeing it in an Enochian conjuration.

Very strange full moon tonight, and now it's practically dawn and time for me to go slug and snail hunting on my runner-bean patch.

JOEL

The rock-cutting worm

The name of the rock-cutting worm mentioned above was "Shamir", it cut stone with its "glance". In one legend Solomon heard that Asmodeus knew the whereabouts of the worm and forced the demon king to help him locate it. Asmodeus told Solomon that all the shamirs belonged to the Angel of the Sea who had given the duty of guarding the worm to moorhens. So Solomon's helpers placed a glass dome over a moorhen's nest containing a few chicks, forcing the moorhen to fetch a shamir to cut a way in so she could feed her young. Solomon's assistants threw dirt on the moorhen, who dropped the shamir, which Solomon then used to build his temple because the *Torah* forbade the use of iron. Some writers have speculated that the shamir was not a magical worm but a radioactive substance, such as Immanuel Velikovsky (*Kronos*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1980) and Frederic B Jueneman ("The Alchemy of Shamir" in his *Essays in Speculative Science*).

"You're insane Boris!"—Boris Balkan, mentioned above, is the bibliophile occultist played by Frank Langella in Polanski's brilliant but much misunderstood film *The Ninth Gate*, in which the allure of Babalon and the left hand path is depicted, which went completely over the head of many critics who hadn't a clue who "the girl" was. Although she is presented simply as a dark "guardian angel", ambiguous as either protector or predator, her true identity as Babalon is confirmed by the ninth engraving from the fictional book at the heart of the film, *De Vmbrarvm Regni Novem Portis* or *The Nine Gates of the Kingdom of Shadows*, which shows a naked woman bearing a strong resemblance to "the girl" riding a seven-headed dragon, hence she is specifically the Great Whore of Babylon *ie* Babalon in occult terms, although even the screenplay doesn't spell it out (I haven't read the novel it was based on, *The Club Dumas* [*El Club Dumas*] by Arturo Perez-Reverte). Babalon is played by Polanski's wife, Emmanuelle Seigner, who was also in *Bitter Moon*. I was discussing with Satyr the origin of some of the engraved plates used in the film; the "hanged man" plate is clearly influenced by the tarot, but I was particularly interested in the engraving of the serpent that features on the title page of the *Novem Portis* and is also tattooed on the thigh of the priestess of The Order of the Silver Serpent (Liana Telfer played by Lena Olin). Satyr noted:

> I wandered into the library, and pulled *A Christian Rosenkreutz Anthology* off the shelf. In it is reproduced Daniel Stolcius' *Pleasure Garden of Chymistry*, 1624, which includes an illustration of a figure that bears a remarkable resemblance to the Serpent of the title page from the *Nine Gates*.

Alas, on viewing the film again the identification is not that close. The Stolcius plate features a lion-headed serpent eating its own eagle-headed tail in the shape of the figure "8" with two faces in the loops which appear to be sun and moon, obviously alchemical. The serpent in the film has an extra loop to the "8" and has a straightforward serpent head and tail, coiled around a tree struck by lightning on the title page, the tattoo being just the snake, but the manner of looping is similar before the Ouroboros-like bite (the word "ouroboros" actually means "tail eater", one of the earliest being the depiction in the *Chrysopoeia* ["Gold Making"] of Cleopatra).

As for W F Ryan, I was haphazardly looking through his list of published papers and spotted this little-known gem: "The Great Beast in Russia: Aleister Crowley's Theatrical Tour in 1913 and his Beastly Writings on Russia" in Arnold McMillin (ed.), *Symbolism and After: Essays on Russian Poetry in Honour of Georgette Donchin*, Bristol, 1992, pp 137–161.

JB

Babylon in the words of the prophet Isaiah

Hi Joel—My conception of Lilith has indeed been tainted by the *Zohar*. As you saw from my email, I was pushing deep into Egypt, and Nephthys, this afternoon. And it being Saturday and all, I naturally ended-up considering her Lord Set as well. It was very useful, and helped me push past late Jewish characterizations of the Queen of the Night. I'll get back on the Maqlû material, as I agree on its importance.

Believe it or not, I had just had the same realization as you not an hour before reading: "I had assumed Babylonian texts mentioned her but just realize I don't know." Seems this is a pretty hot topic.

"Babylon as Rome", the interpretation favored by modern scholars, seems valid, and quite probably reflects the intent of the editors who stitched together what were, in all likelihood, a collection of disjoint fragments, assembling them into the coherent whole we now know as *The Revelation of St John*. Its saving grace is that these fragments appear to be genuine visions, received by one or more persons, in some branch of the Semitic mystery tradition. It contains key images easily traced back into the *Old Testament*, and beyond.

By the time *Revelation* was written, probably around 95 CE, Babylon had been abandoned for nearly 400 years. It seems, therefore, unlikely that the metropolis in Babylonia itself is meant when the authors used the word "Babylon".

If we consider *Revelation* as part of a Jewish tradition, rather than a singular piece of literature, we see Babylon, the city and the woman, used as a symbol of opulence, decadence, power and might, in fundamental opposition to Jehovah and his people, that will be overthrown in the day of the wrath of the Almighty. Consider the images of Babylon contained in the words of the prophet Isaiah in *Isaiah* 21:1–10 and *Isaiah* 47. The King of Babylon was likewise the object of Jehovah's displeasure and proposed wrath, as evidenced by the same prophet in *Isaiah* 14:3–23.

The attentive reader will note the remarkable similarity of several images in these passages with others found in *Revelation*. "John" seems without question to be drawing upon *Isaiah* for inspiration, mining the symbols used therein and giving them new meanings in his prophesy of doom and destruction. That "Rome" would now be equated with "Babylon" is hardly surprising, since the Second Temple of Jerusalem, rebuilt after the Captivity, had been destroyed not 30 years before by Rome in 70 CE.

The capture of Jerusalem, destruction of the First Temple, and forced relocation of the Jews to Babylonia by Nebuchadnezzar, in 586 BCE, is one of the most important events of Jewish history. The construction of the Second Temple at the command of

Cyrus, king of the Persians, gave birth to much of what we know of as "Judaism" today. The return from the 70 years of exile was led by Ezra, the scribe, and it was he, or others working under his guidance, who composed the *Torah*, or five books of Moses. There is no reason to believe that these ever existed in their accepted form prior to this date. To the best of my knowledge of the sources before me, Isaiah is the first to use the name "Babylon" in relation to a woman. To search for antecedents in Mesopotamian mythology, we must look to the etymology of the name itself, and attempt to map its symbolism onto the female deities worshipped since the time of the Sumerians in the land between the rivers.

The Babylon of the *Old Testament* is BBL, in Hebrew, and most likely means, according to Gesenius, and others, "the gate (or hall) of Ba'al", representing a contraction of the two words BBH, "cavity", "aperture", "gate", and BOL, "to have dominion over", "to take a wife", or, "lord, master, possessor, owner". HBOL, with the inclusion of the definite article, means "Ba'al", "Lord". According to Gesenius (*Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, p 131), it is "the name of an idol of the Phoenicians, especially of the Tyrians: it was their domestic and principal deity, also worshipped with great devotion together with Astarte, by the Hebrews, especially in Samaria… Amongst the Babylonians the same deity was called in the Aramæan manner BL Belus for BOL…"

From this it seems apparent that Babylon may be interpreted as the "wife", or "gate" possessed by the "Lord". Crowley interpreted BABALON to mean "the Gate of the God On" (taking "On" in its Egyptian meaning of "the Sun"), and this seems in agreement, more or less, with our investigation so far. The famous "Ishtar Gate" of ancient Babylon immediately springs to mind, and leads us to ask if Ishtar is perhaps the original name of the Lady in question. I believe that indeed she is, that it is possible to trace Babylon back to Inanna, the young whore receiving the fruit of the harvest, through Ishtar (often called "Queen of Babylon") and Beltis, with their cults of prostitution, down through derivative practices which prevailed among the Hebrews, after the captivity, until the sack of the Second Temple by Rome in 70 CE. There seems little doubt that if indeed our Babylon is to be found among the goddesses of the land between the rivers, Inanna, Ishtar, Ashtoreth, by whatever name She was known, is most assuredly that Lady.

SATYR

[Ed's note—Astaroth/Ashtoreth was the goddess Astarte/Ashtart before the rabbis inserted the vowels from the word "boshet" into the names of the foreign gods: b**O**sh**E**t = shame/abomination, so the goddess Ashtart becomes Asht**O**r**E**th. I have often thought

it of interest that preceding the formation of KAOS-BABALON I had an intense period of summoning Astaroth, which at the time I thought of as a male demon from the *Goetia* and did not particularly associate with Babalon, despite knowing that the goddess Astarte was Astaroth's antecedence. In fact, at the time I was not particularly aware where my fascination with Astaroth came from.

This practice of forming denigrating titles and names for deities with letter manipulation seems to me an intriguing form of magic akin to sigil magic, to literally demonize. Baal, for instance, is identified with Molech in *Jeremiah* 19:5: "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind." Molech (also Moloch, although some distinguish the two) was the Ammonite deity, to whom children were sacrificed in fire, but some scholars believe that it is not actually a proper name at all but is derived by combining the consonants from the Hebrew word for "king" (mlk) with the vowels of the word for "shame" (boshet), thus "King of Shame".]

AGLA on the back of the Sigillum Dei Æmeth

Hi Joel—I'm well aware of AGLA on the back of the Sigillum, but I don't recall now whether it even crossed my mind when I composed the notes on "Jubalcain". Honesty prompts me to I say it didn't. That we weren't, at that time, actively addressing Enochian issues might be a good excuse, but little more than that.

The word AGLA appears on two *sigilla* actually, Dee's and another found in *Liber Juratus*, more commonly known as *The Sworne Booke of Honorius*. Daniel J Driscoll, editor and translator of the first printed edition, was of the opinion this other source was composed no later than the year 1311 [*The Sworn Book of Honourius (sic) the Magician.* Gillette, New Jersey: Heptangle Books, 1983. p *xviii*]. This is as may be, but it at least admits the possibility that a nearly identical symbol was used on a similar sigil (*Ibid*, p 10, here called the "Sigil of God", as opposed to Dee's "Sigil of God's Truth"). This earlier version is described and illustrated in Sloane MS. 313, which itself may be the oldest grimoire found in the British Museum's collection (Driscoll, p *xi*). Moreover, in one of the prayers in *Honorius*, one with a great litany of names divine, AGLA heads the list (*Ibid*, "The 100 Names of God", p 14). We certainly can't rule out the possibility that Uriel, Kelly, Dee, or all three were aware of its prior existence in the literature available at the time, and drew on that source. In fact, the archangel specifically instructed Dee he would find the *Sigillum Dei* perfected in a book already in his possession (Sloane

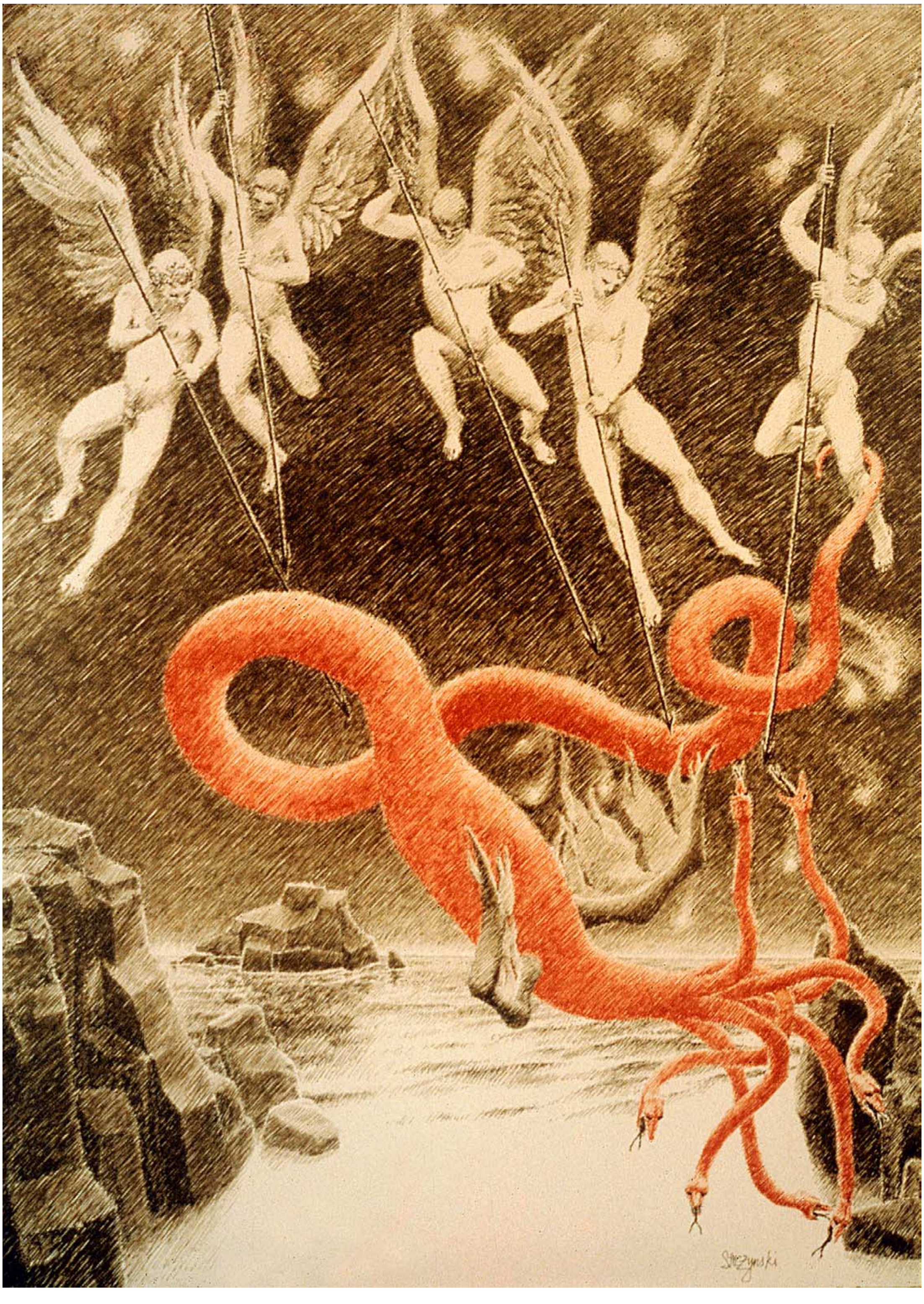
ms. 3677, fol. 14r—giving my eyes a break for the moment, and citing Ashmole's transcription instead of the original). Dee later implies (*Ibid,* fol. 18) he found multiple designs in his library, and wondered how they might be compared or combined in order to arrive at one best suited to the divine purpose.

The repetition of some material attributed to Agrippa is certainly one other instance of such "borrowing", on someone's part. Noted references to other authors in the "Libri Mysteriorum" seem to indicate Dee had extensive knowledge of previous work in the field.

agla written between the arms of a cross appears to be an apt symbol of "Earth", and therefore it makes some sense that it would be placed on the bottom, or underside of the Sigillum. But that is a modern interpretation, based upon Golden Dawn usage of agla. David Jones was of the opinion that "The Sigil of God" was an obvious precursor of "The Sigil of God's Truth".

Good to hear of your slug hunting: hope you were successful. I've had a few bean beetles on my "Jacob's Cattle" bush beans, but so far no slugs. A woodchuck (groundhog, "whistle pig", or what have you), devastated the tomatoes soon after transplanting, but that has been the extent of the damage inflicted by Mother Nature so far. Last year we had a peculiarly wet summer, and I got to watch 15 gorgeous tomato plants, laden with fruit, slowly rot from the ground up. I'm hoping the experience won't be repeated.

Take care, SATYR



"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon…"

Revelation 12:7

The seven-headed dragon and the demon Choronzon

by Joel Biroco

The beasts of the Apocalypse and their relationship with precursors in Near Eastern mythology, Enochian entities, & Crowley's skrying of the Æthyrs in Algeria in 1909

In consideration of the Enochian Keys and their Apocalyptic imagery, and *Revelation*, a bizarre constellation of creatures emerges that are difficult to disentangle. Even the identity of the Beast 666 is far more ambiguous than generally realised, Aleister Crowley may have got the wrong beast if he wanted the one the Great Whore of Babylon was riding (hereinafter Babalon). And even the number may be wrong. And the more one looks the more the identities of Lucifer, Satan, the Great Red Dragon, and the serpent become indistinct and related by strange connections to such Enochian entities as the Stooping Dragon, Telocvovim (the Death Dragon), and John Dee's demon Coronzon (Choronzon to Crowley).

First off notice that the Great Red Dragon of *Revelation* 12:3, who wants to devour the pregnant woman's child, has seven heads and ten horns, perhaps identifying him with Babalon's beast, although the red dragon has seven crowns upon his heads unlike the ten crowns of the beast that rises up out of the sea in 13:1, which, though it has the seven heads and the ten horns is distinctly undragon-like, looking like a leopard with a bear's feet and lion's mouth. Babalon's beast in 17:3 is "scarlet coloured" and has seven heads and ten horns, no mention of how many crowns, if any. The red dragon in 12:9 is described as the ancient snake, who is called the Devil and Satan, and there was war in Heaven with Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon (12:7). So it's intriguing that Telocvovim in the 19th Enochian Key, for whom Babalon's bed is his dwelling place, is translated as "Him that is fallen", suggesting Lucifer, and yet this name in Enochian appears to be a contraction of two separate words, "death" (*teloch*, , used in Keys 3, 8, 11) + "dragon" (*vovin*, , two variant forms in the 8th Key).

In *Revelation* 13:4 the dragon is said to give power to the beast, this is the seven-headed, ten-horned, ten-crowned leopard-bear-lion beast, which seems to indicate they are to be regarded as two separate creatures, as William Blake painted them in his "The Great Red Dragon and the Beast from the Sea" (c. 1805, in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC). Babalon's beast is never described as a dragon, but the scarlet colour seems to link it with the red dragon. And, to confuse matters still further, after the seven-headed, ten-horned, ten-crowned beast rises up out of the sea in 13:1 *another* beast comes up out of the earth in 13:11 and this one has two horns like a lamb and speaks like a dragon, and—although it's ambiguous—it's this beast that seems to be 666 in 13:18 (these two beasts were illustrated together in a woodcut by Albrecht Dürer).

So, "The Beast 666" doesn't appear to be the same beast that Babalon rides. Aleister Crowley in Chapter 49 of the *Book of Lies* indicates that it is the seven-headed beast that Babalon rides that he "frankly identifies himself with", yet it is far from clear that Babalon's beast should necessarily be construed as "The Beast 666", nor is it clear whether the Beast 666 is a two-horned lamb with a dragon's voice from the earth or a seven-headed ten-horned leopard-bear-lion beast from the sea, although it is definitely one or the other. And as if that wasn't enough, we may have to revise our idea that the number of the Beast is 666. The *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, which contains a fragmentary papyrus of *Revelation* that is the earliest known (late third / early fourth century), gives the number of the Beast as 616 [P.Oxy. LVI 4499]. Irenæus had previously cited and refuted this number. The Greek word used for "beast" in *Revelation*, incidentally, is *therion* (θηριον), hence Crowley as "The Master Therion" and "To Mega Therion", the Great Beast.

To summarise and gather as much clarity as possible so far from John's bizarre account of his revelation: Babalon's beast, though seven-headed and ten-horned, could be one of two seven-headed ten-horned beasts, one being the Great Red Dragon Michael fights that has seven crowns on those heads, the other being the leopard-bear-lion beast from the sea with ten crowns on those heads. Babalon's beast, however, is scarlet-coloured, like the Great Red Dragon, which we know for certain is not the Beast 666. Perhaps it is a mistake to expect to be able to distil clarity from a phantasmagoric hallucination, nonetheless this image of Babalon—the Great Whore, the Scarlet Woman—riding the Beast represents for occultists a profound sexual mystery quite apart from such notions read into *Revelation* of "fornication" being a metaphor for worshipping other gods and "Babylon" as really being merely a guarded reference to Rome. In John's vision the word that interests me the most used to describe Babalon is "Mystery", in the Greek *musterion* (μυστηριον), a derivative of *muo* (μυω), "to shut the mouth", hence a secret or "mystery", which, according to *Strong's Dictionary*, comes

from the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites. In my experience the true understanding of the mystery of Babalon comes essentially from occult initiation (on "the prayer mats of the flesh" you might say, to borrow the title of the Chinese erotic novel by Li Yu).

Just as "Babylon the Great" is generally regarded by Biblical commentators as Rome, so is the beast with seven heads and ten horns—Rome stood on seven hills and the Roman empire was divided into ten provinces by Augustus Caesar. But I'm not convinced that this "reasonable" way to look at it is the only or the best way. How does seeing the beast as Rome help, because, following this line of reasoning, so is the Great Red Dragon, who Michael fights as Satan. Why should the beast that rose up out of the sea and Babalon's beast be identified as Rome but the Great Red Dragon be regarded as Satan? More importantly—and this is a question left unaddressed by those who seek to "explain" *Revelation*—if the text is properly understood as a carefully constructed allegory does this not undermine its status as genuine visionary experience, as a "revelation" from God?

The idea of the seven-headed serpent or dragon is much earlier than the Bible, it appears to have emerged from Babylonia—where it is mentioned in Old Babylonian lists and omens—from even earlier precedents. The seven-headed serpent is mentioned in the epic *Andimdimma* where it is compared with the weapon of the god Ninurta (see Landsberger, *Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamien* [Leipzig, 1934], p 60). A seven-headed serpent is also found on a Sumerian macehead; a seal dating back to the middle of the third millennium BC from Tell Asmar (ancient Eshnunna), 50 miles northeast of modern Baghdad, shows the slaying of a dragon with seven heads (both are illustrated in Alexander Heidel's *The Babylonian Genesis* [1951], figures 15 and 16). In *Psalms* 74:14 "the *heads* of Leviathan" are mentioned, and *Isaiah* 27:1 has a reference to Leviathan that strongly parallels a reference to the seven-headed dragon or serpent Lotan from Ugaritic mythology mentioned on a tablet from Ras Shamra. Lotan was slain by Baal. In *Isaiah* 27:1 it is written, in Heidel's translation:

> "On that day the Lord will punish
> With his sword, which is hard and great and strong,
> Leviathan, the fleeing serpent,
> And Leviathan, the tortuous serpent,
> And he will slay the crocodile (*tannin*) that is in the sea."
> [Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, p 103]

The King James version has "dragon (*tannin*) that is in the sea" but Heidel sees it as a crocodile in the Nile (the Nile is referred to as "the Sea" in *Isa*. 19:5 and *Nah*. 3:8 and is

today called *el-Bahr*, "the Sea", by Arabs). The fourteenth century BC Ras Shamra tablets were discovered in 1928 on the site of the ancient north Syrian city of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), excavated from a temple dedicated to Baal, and on one of these tablets is an inscription describing a battle scene in which one deity addresses another:

> "When thou shalt smite Lotan, the fleeing serpent,
> (And) shall put an end to the tortuous serpent,
> Shalyat of the seven heads. . . . ."
> [*Ibid*, p 107]

"Shalyat" is an epithet of Lotan. Leviathan in *Job* 41 becomes completely demythologised and now only has one head—the riddle-like description there is generally understood to be of a crocodile. (Note that there is no real evidence that the so-called "chaos dragon" Tiamat of the *Enuma Elish* was actually a dragon, or that she is related to the Hebrew word *tehom*, rendered as "the deep" in *Genesis* 1:2.)

Turning to the 8th Enochian Key, I have become fascinated by the reference to the "Stooping Dragon":

> The midday, the first, is as the third heaven made of Hyacinth Pillars—26—in whome The Elders are become strong, which I have prepared for my own righteousness sayeth the Lord whose long contynuance shall be as bucklers to the stooping Dragon and like unto the harvest of a wyddow. How many are there which remain in the glorie of the earth which are and shall not see death until this howse fall and the Dragon sink? Come away, for the Thunders have spoken. Come away, for the Crownes of the Temple, and the coat of him that is, was, and shall be crowned, are divided. Come Appeare to the terror of the earth and to our cumfort and of such as are prepared.

A "buckler" is "a small shield used for parrying" and, in this context, "stoop" means "to swoop down, as a bird of prey". Presumably then, given the Apocalyptic tone of the Enochian Keys, the Stooping Dragon is the Great Red Dragon of *Revelation*.

Both Crowley and Kenneth Grant refer to the Stooping Dragon a number of times. Crowley, for instance, regards the Stooping Dragon as apparently being the equivalent of Apophis in "The Temple of Solomon the King", *The Equinox* Vol. I, No. II, where in addition Austin Osman Spare's diagram of The Fall is reproduced showing an *eight*-headed dragon/serpent (also plate 1 in Kenneth Grant's *Nightside of Eden*). See in addition the reference in the 30th Æthyr of *The Vision and the Voice*: "Come thou, who art joined with me to bruise the Dragon's head." A footnote explains that this is a reference to the Stooping Dragon. In Crowley's 7th Æthyr the Stooping Dragon "raised

his head unto Daäth", there was an explosion, his head was blasted, and the ashes were dispersed throughout the 10th Æthyr. And the phrase "The Piercing of the Coils of the Stooping Dragon" appears in *The Rite of Mercury*, which in *Liber Israfel* is given as "The Piercing of the Scales of the Crocodile". None of this is graced with the merest glimmer of explanation. There are echoes in *Isaiah* 51:9 in the cutting of Rahab and the piercing of the "dragon" (King James), represented by the word *tannin*, which Heidel again suggests should here be taken as "crocodile", although it should be pointed out that the term *tannin* also occurs in the Ras Shamra tablets where it is equated with "Shalyat of the seven heads". (Absorption of a mythical monster into an ordinary creature also occurs in Chinese literature, where the river dragon Chiao is later demythologised and seen as a crocodile.) In *Job* 26:12–13 there is a curious mention of the "fleeing serpent" or "crooked serpent" that in the King James version disguises a further reference to the name Rahab by translating "he smiteth Rahab" as "he smiteth through the proud". Alexander Heidel provides a convincing argument to show that Rahab, besides being a designation of Egypt, is synonymous with Leviathan (*The Babylonian Genesis*, pp 102–114; coincidentally Rahab is the name of a harlot in *Joshua* 2:1–7 and 6:17–25), which in turn appears to have been the seven-headed serpent Lotan, although clearly we see in the various references the crumbling away of the original legendary material, and that process of mythic erosion is further continued in the references to fabulous ophidian beings in *Revelation*. And curiously enough we can see a similar process at work in the emergence of the "Stooping Dragon" via the skrying of Kelly and Dee which is further elaborated in Crowley's skrying of the Æthyrs in terms of an explosion of a dragon's head in Daäth with the debris being scattered in the 10th Æthyr and the creation of the modern demon Choronzon.

Straining my own credulity somewhat, could the dragon's exploding head explain how Austin Spare's curious eight-headed dragon, one of the heads being shown in Daäth being hit by the lightning bolt, became the seven-headed dragon of *Revelation*? Kenneth Grant, in *Nightside of Eden*, is similarly obscure. On p 8 he says that Daäth is "the Eighth Head of the Stooping Dragon, raised up when the Tree of Life was shattered and Macroprosopus set a flaming sword against Microprosopus". On p 43 Grant explains (I use the word loosely): "The Dragon whose eighth head reigns in Daäth is identical with the Beast 666. The male half is Shugal (333), the howler in the Desert of Set; the female half is Choronzon (333) or Typhon, the prototype of Babalon, the Scarlet Woman." There are further obscurities on the eight-headed dragon on pages 56 and 81 ("…blah blah Lovecraft… blah blah Cthulhu… blah blah Tunnels of Set…").

Well, there is undoubtedly something of interest in all of this, but the thing I find odd about both Crowley's and Grant's mentions of the Stooping Dragon is that they

appear to assume that this has some meaning to the reader and yet neither actually refer the phrase back to what appears to be its only genuine occurrence, namely in the 8th Enochian Key received by Dee and Kelly. Now it could be that they took this knowledge for granted, but the fact remains that they went on to use the phrase in what to me is an obscurantist fashion and I am not convinced their obfuscations shed a great deal of light on the use of the term in the 8th Key. In a note on his skrying of the 10th Æthyr Crowley says: "The doctrine of the 'Fall' and the 'Stooping Dragon' must be studied carefully." I am inclined to think this is in the nature of a marginal reminder to himself to do just that some time. But he is certainly right that these ideas have a great bearing on the question of the Abyss.

The Dweller in the Abyss, Choronzon, comes in two spellings. Coronzon is the original spelling of John Dee and Edward Kelly, Choronzon is the "corrected" spelling by Aleister Crowley that adds up to 333 (actually ChURUNZUN, ie חורונזון). In *The Vision and the Voice* (*Liber 418*) Crowley was specifically told that the number of Choronzon was 333 in his skrying of the 10th Æthyr. Yet he obviously already knew this because he used the spelling in the previously skryed Æthyrs 17, 15, 12, and 11. The 17th was skryed on Dec 2, 1909, and the 10th on Dec 6. So far as I am aware, *The Vision and the Voice*, published in 1911, was the first time Crowley ever wrote about Choronzon, *Liber 333* (*The Book of Lies*) was published in 1913 (note Chapter 42, "Dust-Devils"). He shows that he was aware of the original spelling of Dee and Kelly because like them he refers to the demon as "that mighty devil". In the 28th Æthyr Crowley received what he regarded later as a prophecy concerning his experience of Choronzon in the 10th: "Thou shalt be vexed by dispersion." Dispersion also adds up to 333 in Greek (ἀκολασια). In the 10th Æthyr it is even stated explicitly: "Choronzon is Dispersion." Yet in a footnote Crowley claims not to have realised at the time that there was any correspondence between "Dispersion" and "Choronzon". Dee's spelling of "Coronzon" adds up to 345 in Hebrew (Donald Tyson gets 365 by taking Nun final as 70). So why exactly did Crowley change the spelling from Dee's original *before* he was told the demon's number in the 10th, if not because he wished to link Choronzon to the forewarning of being vexed by dispersion mentioned in the 28th, and present the demon as responsible for mental scattering and distraction. Did he perhaps, either consciously or subconsciously, desire to have his change legitimised and this is why he had the demon state its number? It's fascinating that the spelling "Choronzon" is already in use before the 10th Æthyr but the "Babalon" spelling is not, Crowley was still spelling her name "Babylon", and it is in the 10th Æthyr that he first uses the correct spelling alluded to in the 12th Æthyr (in the phrase "Gate of the God On" באבאלען, ie Babalon: BAB באב = gate; AL אל = God; ON ען = On) where it becomes representative of a "victory over Choronzon" and mark of

the banishment of illusion. (Of course, if we regard C[h]oronzon and Babalon as essentially Enochian words, their numbers 333 and 156 when rendered in Hebrew are irrelevant and merely a curiosity.)

The account of the skrying of the 10th Æthyr was unusual among the 30 Æthyrs in that it was subjected to editing and revision. It states in the published version in *The Vision and the Voice:*

> This cry was obtained on Dec 6, 1909, between 2 and 4.15 pm, in a lonely valley of fine sand, in the desert near Bou-Saada. The Æthyr was edited and revised on the following day.

The original account penned at the time was in fact torn out of the MS. notebook, according to an editorial note in the 1998 Weiser edition (p 159 n1 and p 170 n3) . I have often wondered why exactly that was. And why, indeed, was this Æthyr edited and revised? What was the nature of this revision? Crowley doesn't say, and the torn-out pages are now apparently lost. Was it simply to create a more ordered account out of the chaotic events of the operation, with bracketed explanations, or was there another reason?

Although the demon "Coronzon" does not appear in the Enochian of the 19 Keys and so is not therefore strictly an Enochian word, as implied by Donald Tyson who believes it is Enochian for Lucifer, nonetheless this entity was named to Dee and Kelly on one occasion. (Laycock also lists Coronzon as an Enochian word in *The Complete Enochian Dictionary*.) The passage naming Coronzon is found in the *Cotton Appendix* XLVI, "Mensis Mysticus Saobaticus, Pars prima ejudem". The dialogue took place on April 21, 1584, and is between Edward Kelly, John Dee, and the Archangel Gabriel, on the topic of the Angelic Tongue, now called Enochian. Kelly asked whether Angelic was known in any part of the world, or not. Gabriel answered that "Coronzon (for so is the true name of that mighty Devil)" envied the status of man in the eyes of God and so began to assail him. Coronzon prevailed with the result that man lost "the Garden of Felicity" and was "driven forth (as your Scriptures record) unto the Earth which was covered with brambles…". And as a result of that so too was the Angelic language spoken by Adam in his innocence also lost. (This episode naming Coronzon is recorded in Meric Casaubon's *A True and Faithful Relation of what passed for many Yeers Between Dr John Dee … and some Spirits,* pp 92–93. The Enochian Keys themselves were received over the period from April 13 to July 13, 1584, at Cracow. Causabon's title "A True and Faithful…" could be an allusion to *Revelation* 21:5.)

So far as I have been able to ascertain, the demon Coronzon does not appear in prior literature. If we put aside for one moment the popular conception of what happened in

"the Garden of Felicity", and do not rush to the conclusion that Coronzon is necessarily to be identified with the serpent of the Garden of Eden, Satan, or Lucifer—themselves conflated—we are left on reading the passage in isolation with "the true name of that mighty Devil" who appears to have been responsible for the loss of the Angelic language, the "tongue of power", to humanity. The serpent in *Genesis* 3 is neither named as Satan there nor said to be Satan's instrument, this is an interpretation. The serpent in *Gen* 3:1 is described as "more subtil than any beast of the field". The "beasts of the field" is a phrase that occurs in the 19th Key represented by the Enochian word *Levithmong* () and also appears in the "Daughter of Fortitude" passage. I point this out only to emphasise the resonances of the language used. Even in the *New Testament* the identification of the serpent of the Garden of Eden as Satan is not decisive: in *2 Corinthians* 11:3 it is said that "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty" but still does not name the serpent as Satan and *Revelation* 12:9 mentions "…that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan…", a sentiment repeated in *Rev* 20:2, but the serpent is not mentioned explicitly in the context of the Garden of Eden, although presumably this is the implication. *Matthew* 10:16 even advocates that one should take after the serpent: "be ye therefore wise as serpents". The Gnostic text *The Testimony of Truth* discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945 is particularly interesting here in that it tells the story of the Garden of Eden from the point of view of the wise serpent who denounces God as a "malicious grudger" for refusing Adam gnosis, and also mocks God as lacking in omniscience since he had to ask where Adam was when he hid from him (*Genesis* 3:8–9). The text also equates the bronze serpent made by Moses in *Numbers* 21:9 with Christ. (The papyrus of the Nag Hammadi texts date to about AD 350–400, although the texts themselves may date to AD 120–150.) The conception of the Serpent as the True Redeemer is nothing new to occultists, and was touched on in Martin Scorsese's 1988 film *The Last Temptation of Christ* (the number 358 has a few occultists overly excited, because MShICh or *mâshîyach* [משיח], "Messiah", and NChSh or *nâchâsh* [נחש], the "Serpent" of *Genesis*, both add up to 358 by gematria). Given that the Bible itself is hardly definitive in establishing the serpent of the Garden as Satan, how much more so should we be wary of blithely associating Coronzon as revealed to Dee and Kelly with Satan or Lucifer. Although Dee and Kelly undoubtedly brought their own assumptions and dogmas to the Work, it is probably better to regard the Enochian revelations as a direct angelic communication aimed at establishing a fresh picture of the Fall of Man and as far as possible avoid contaminating it by previously held ideas.

Most people who have looked at this passage in Casaubon have indeed too readily identified Dee's Coronzon as Lucifer/Satan, and also as the Stooping Dragon given that the Great Red Dragon of *Revelation* 12 is there said to be the Devil, Satan, and

"that old serpent". Indeed, Crowley in the 3rd Æthyr says that Choronzon's head is "raised unto Daäth", thereby explicitly identifying Choronzon with his previous characterisation of the Stooping Dragon in the 7th Æthyr, which raises its head unto Daäth where it is blasted (the ashes being spread in the 10th, Choronzon's domain), which links to Spare's eight-headed dragon with one head in Daäth and then to a seven-headed dragon and then full circle to the Great Red Dragon of *Revelation* and again Satan and the serpent and the even earlier Lotan and Leviathan. In the 10th Æthyr Crowley (as Choronzon) also says: "Is not the head of the great Serpent arisen into Knowledge?" Knowledge (gnosis) being Daäth, this shows Crowley made little distinction between the Stooping Dragon, the Serpent, and Choronzon—or even that "Choronzon" identifies *himself* as the Serpent if the whole is taken together as a truly channelled work without any contamination by Crowley's own concerns. (The dull-minded like to believe that human beings have no creative part to play in genuine spirit communication beyond reception. Anyone who has skryed will know, however, if they have not come away from the experience deluded by whatever entities they have been trafficking with, that what results is a blend of information already known—ordered more lucidly and coherently—with the inclusion of genuinely new material that emerges with the tacit acceptance that the whole be regarded as a communication from spirits.)

Some, such as Geoffrey James, have even identified Telocvovim ("Him that is fallen", literally "Death Dragon") of the 19th Key as Coronzon rather than Lucifer (there is no text referring to Coronzon's fall), going so far as to refer to Telocvovim as "the great dragon Coronzon". I believe all these identifications of C[h]oronzon are in error inasmuch as they are made too easily without taking into account the complexity of the matrix of mythic material out of which the demon emerged. Instead it is instructive to look more closely at the serpent of *Genesis*, given that the serpent alone, set apart from later interpretations of who or what the serpent was actually supposed to be apart from a persuasive snake, is as much as we are entitled to draw into our correlation on the basis of the skrying of Dee and Kelly, where Coronzon as such was born into this world. The Greek word used for "serpent" in *Revelation* is *ophis* (οφις), which simply means a snake or serpent, and, ostensibly because of the reference in *Revelation*, the word also means Satan. In *Genesis*, however, the Hebrew word *nâchâsh* (נחש) is used, which, according to *Strong's Dictionary* (entry 5175) means "a snake (from its hiss):—serpent", but *Strong's* points out that the word is derived from *nâchash* 5172: "a primitive root; properly, to hiss, ie whisper a (magic) spell; generally, to prognosticate". Similarly, *nachash* 5173, also derived from 5172, means: "an incantation or augury:—enchantment". So, the "serpent" is already starting to look much more interesting, as a sibilant magical incantation, or serpent magic. *Job* 3:8 also appears to contain a cryptic allusion to a

magical evocation when it speaks of those "who are skilful to rouse up Leviathan" (the presence of the name Leviathan is hidden in the King James version, where it is translated as "mourning"). I am inclined to think of Coronzon as something evoked or invoked, although not necessarily an entity. In Crowley's *Confessions*, interestingly enough, one of the transmogrifying illusory forms Choronzon took as witnessed by the scribe Victor Neuburg, besides a woman he was once in love with, was a human-headed serpent. Choronzon appeared to exert a powerfully disorientating phantasmagoria, as if this was all Choronzon was, which was quelled and died down and was known to be gone when Crowley wrote the name of Babalon, for the first time spelt this way, in the sand with his ring. As Crowley noted:

> The name of the Dweller in the Abyss is Choronzon, but he is not really an individual. The Abyss is empty of being; it is filled with all possible forms, each equally inane, each therefore evil in the only true sense of the word—that is, meaningless but malignant, insofar as it craves to become real. [*Confessions*, p 623]

Not Lucifer, not Satan, not the Stooping Dragon, nor even Lilith the only true serpent in the Garden, usually represented in medieval Books of Hours as a human-headed serpent; Crowley's skrying of the 10th Æthyr does not read like an encounter with an identifiable entity so much as an enchantment engulfing both participants who discover when it is over, banished "In Nomine Babalon", that they have been wrestling with thin air. This picture of Choronzon is to me much more fascinating and profound than making him a cardboard cut-out Satan in some illusory Apocalyptic drama craving to be real just as were mere dust devils in the desert to Crowley in the name of Choronzon. This is indeed why to cross the Abyss is to come face to face with Choronzon, for we are fully everything we are fooled into believing is real, though it changes before our eyes constantly. The irony is that few things seem more real than Choronzon when encountered, or as illusory when the ordeal passes, like a storm that has decidedly moved on.

"Thou didst shatter the heads of Leviathan, thou didst give him as food to the desert dwellers."

Psalms 74:14.

Correspondence

How did Crowley know the 10^{th} Æthyr was accursèd before he skryed it?

Satyr—How the hell did Crowley know that Choronzon was associated with the 10^{th} Æthyr before he skryed it? Nothing in the governors of the Æthyr to suggest that nor in the name of the Aire, ZAX (ⱣⵝΓ). Why did he prepare to call Choronzon? If one is going to skry the 30 Æthyrs this poses a question: should one also regard the 10^{th} as the abode of Choronzon and take similar precautions?

Crowley begins his preamble to the 10^{th}: "This Æthyr, being accursèd, and the seer forewarned…" And so he prepared the Circle and Triangle of Art for protection and demonic constraint, cut the throats of three pigeons as sacrificial victims and let their blood pour within the three angles of the triangle in which he sat as Seer, not reciting the Call of the Æthyr until the sand had soaked up their blood. He tooled up Neuburg as Scribe in the circle with a Magick Dagger with strict instructions *on oath* that he should not hesitate to strike fearlessly at anything that may break through the circle, even should it have "the appearance of the Seer himself", Crowley possessed by Choronzon in other words, which actually happened. Major precautions, he clearly knew what to expect if we are to believe that the Æthyr was actually skryed in the manner depicted in the published report (the pages being torn out of the MS. notebook and the stated editing and revision of this Æthyr the following day may suggest creative reworking of what actually happened).

Taking it at face value, which is how I would far prefer to believe it actually happened, how then did Crowley know the Æthyr was accursèd beforehand, when and how was he forewarned? Choronzon is mentioned in the 11^{th}, but not necessarily in such a way as to suggest the 10th was therefore all about Choronzon. Crowley also says that the 10^{th} is accursèd in the 22^{nd} Æthyr, although without mentioning Choronzon. Working with just the Dee material, and not Crowley's, would I assume the 10^{th} is associated this

way and perceive such a forewarning in the original source material? This seems a simple question that has been overlooked, unless I'm missing something equally as obvious. Could Crowley's linkage of Choronzon to this Æthyr be a not necessarily helpful preconception for someone approaching the 10th anew today?

JOEL

Hi Joel—I must say that I disagree with your statement, "Choronzon is mentioned in the 11th, but not necessarily in such a way as to suggest the 10th was therefore all about Choronzon." In the 11th we read:

> And I said unto the Angel:
> Is there not one appointed as a warden?
> And he said:
> Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani.

That the 11th is the last bastion set against the malice of Mr C seems obvious to me, given its description and the message of its Angel, and the answer to Crowley's question, above, strongly implies that the 10th is Choronzon, and little if anything else. Each Æthyr had a guardian, or warden, as he worked his way up. When the Angel answers with the words of Jesus, as he hung upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" [*Mark* 15:34] it seems to suggest a definite "No" to Crowley's inquiry, though it isn't stated quite so explicitly.

Jones never questioned the nature of the 10th, nor did I, and I agree that looking at the Dee material it is not obvious to the casual observer that anything might be amiss there, compared with the other Æthyrs. But on closer examination, I think, we are forced to admit that something is different about it.

Look at an illustration of Dee's "Great Table" [Turner, Robert, *Elizabethan Magic*, p 59. See also James, Geoffrey, *The Enochian Evocation of Dr John Dee*, p 117; British Museum, Sloane MS. 3191, fols. 56v–57r; and others] and compare it with that of "The 91 Symmetrical Characters" [Turner, p 61. See also James, p 116; Sloane MS. 3191, fols. 49v–50r; and others]. Both were received on the same day, in the same action of 25 June, 1584 [Casaubon, Meric (ed.), *A True and Faithful Relation of what passed for many Yeers Between Dr John Dee … and some Spirits*, pp 172–178], and curiously enough, the latter was shown Kelly, and recorded by him, before the former. The symmetrical characters are sigils of what are often called the Governors of the 30 Æthyrs (though this is something of a misnomer). The name of each of these 91 Governors may be found

listed in Col. III of Dee's "Liber Scientiæ, Auxilii, et Victoriæ Terrestris" [Sloane ms. 3191, fols. 16v–31r; Turner, pp 50–57; and others]. Looking closely at "The 91 Symmetrical Characters" as they appear on the Great Table, you will see that most of the figures, but not all, are made up of six segments each, drawn from the center of one square to the next, encompassing seven squares in all. After 88 of these seven-square sigils have been positioned upon the table, there remain eight squares left over. Six of these squares are paired, with one segment between them, and two squares are apparently a part of no sigil at all. By noting the positions of these orphaned squares on the Great Table, we find that the corresponding letters are drawn backwards when possible, and are found by comparison to be AO, N, L, RA [Turner, p 59, is incorrect here, his Great Table exhibiting "OA" instead of "RA". James, p 117, agrees with Dee's Great Table, Sloane ms. 3191, fol. 57r], and PA. Seven of these eight letters, when arranged in their proper order, form the name *Paraoan*, the name of #65, the 2nd Governor of the 22nd Æthyr. Dee is instructed to perform this same exercise in an operation on 26 June, 1584, the day after receiving the tables [Casaubon, p 179].

There remains one letter of our original eight, the backward "L", which has yet to be included in the name of any Governor. Immediately after the angels explained to Dee the manner in which *Paraoan* is obtained, he was instructed to take the letters of the three Governors of the 10th Æthyr, *Lexarph*, *Comanan*, *Tabitom*, and leaving off the initial "L" of the first name, write the remaining 20 letters in tabular form, left to right, in four rows of five letters each. These were then to be placed in a particular manner "without the first Table" [*Ibid*], to form a large cross in the center of "The Great Table". This cross serves to bind the four quadrants together, as Ave explains, and Dee refers to it on occasion as the "crosse of union". Indeed, those who developed the Enochian material used by the Golden Dawn called the above table of twenty squares the "Tablet of Union", employing it in that Order's "Portal" ritual, the bridge between the Inner and Outer orders, and its formula is central to the *Inner Order RR et AC's* "Consecration of the Vault of the Adepts", arguably their most important ceremony. The same table is found in the Golden Dawn Cypher Manuscript [fol. 54]. Kelly suffered a migraine, to which he appears to have been prone, during the reception of this material, and when he became convinced that the angel Ave mocked his pain, Dee reports "A great temptation fell on E.K." [Casaubon, p 179]. Though little of what transpired occurs in the record at this point, it appears from a later description that Kelly's temptation took the form of frightful curses of not only Ave, but Michael, Gabriel, and the heavenly powers in general [*Ibid*, p 183].

In Dee's diagrams, the "crosse of union" was generally drawn in solid black [Sloane ms. 3191, fols. 49v–50r, 53v–54r, 56v–57r], and in a marginal note he refers to it as the

"black crosse" [Casaubon, p 180], and more fully on at least one occasion as "the wicked their black Crosse" [*Ibid*, p 184]. This was in part due to one of its principal uses, as explained by Ave. On each of the four tablets that make up the Great Table are four Calvary crosses consisting of ten squares. Beneath the horizontal arms of each are sixteen squares (sometimes referred to in modern practice as "the lesser squares"), arranged in four rows of two squares each on either side of the lower vertical portion of the cross. A single letter of the "black crosse" stands on the same line as each of these pairs, and when prefixed to any of these two letter combinations, "the name of a Devil, or wicked Angel" is formed [*Ibid*, p 180]. Kelly's headache and subsequent outburst over the perceived scoff of Ave may be more significant than at first appears. It occurs immediately after the discussion of the "black crosse", formed from the names of the three Governors of the 10th Æthyr, and their assembly into the "Tablet of Union". We are told somewhat more of this incident in an entry later this same day, as noted above, where Kelly states that he believes that his behavior was the work of the Devil, whereupon the angel Ave reappears, declaring this indeed to have been the case [*Ibid*, p 183].

Dee suspected that some mystery was implied in constructing the "black crosse" from the Governors of the 10th Æthyr, and said as much to the angel when the action resumed [*Ibid*]. Ave evaded his concerns, and added to the confusion by explaining that the "L aversed", which was explicitly stated to be the first letter of *Lexarph*, may also be an "N", and adds:

> … As far as that N stretcheth in the Character, so far shall that Countrey be consumed with fire, and swallowed into Hell, as Sodom was for wickednesse… Prophets speak of dayes, [as] presently, that are far off. But we speak of dayes that are hard at hand. For, immediately after your being with Caesar, shall the whole world be in sudden alteration. Battails and bloudshed great number: The Kings of the earth shall run unto the Hills, and say cover us. [*Ibid.* This last appears to refer to the opening of the Sixth Seal, *Revelation* 6:12–17]

It is interesting to observe that though *Lexarph* is the Governor of the region "Caspia", the Governor following, *Comanan*, is the Governor of "Germania", which, at least in part, includes those lands belonging to Emperor Rudolf (whom Dee notes as being the "Caesar" of whom it is spoken in the prophesy, indeed the ruler to whom he had been commanded to address the message of the angels).

The attentive student of history will note that the Thirty Years War began in Germania, about twelve years after the death of Dee, or less than thirty-seven years after the prophesy, and resulted in one of the most significant "alterations" in European

politics of that age. Personally, I might even be so bold as to note that a few decades after Crowley opened the Æthyrs in North Africa, this same region once again was the scene of a phenomenal amount of fire and bloodshed. This time however, the time elapsed was only thirty years.

The above discussion of whether the "L" of *Lexarph* might be an "N" seems to have caused Dee some difficulty, as later in a subsequent action with Ave he appears to confound this "N" with that found in *Paraoan*. The angel proceeds as if Dee is correct, saying, "Every letter in Paraoan, is a living fire: but all of one quality and of one Creation: But unto N is delivered a viol of Destruction, according to that part that he is of Paraoan the Governour." [*Ibid*, p 188]

In preparing this, I am reminded that I have already sent you a discussion of the apparent nature of the Watchtowers, in a previous email regarding *Coronzon*. Rather than repeat information that by now has become familiar, I will limit myself to a brief summary, for ease of reference.

The Devils, or wicked Angels, whose names are formed using letters from the black crosse, are not the sole entities of a questionable nature associated with the Watchtowers. In the vision heralding the reception of this portion of the angelic system, Kelly beheld a multitude of spirits that were not included in Ave's subsequent exposition. When Dee asked what they were, the angel answered, "They be Ministers and servants… There shalt thou see thy old Sondenna [a demon of Kelly's acquaintance—Ed], and many other wicked ones, that thou hast dealt withall. Hereby shall you judge truly of wicked Magick." [*Ibid*, pp 184–185] A curious statement in its own right, and even more so when coming from one of God, his Holy Creatures.

Some days after the Watchtower material was recorded, during the reception of the 19th Call or Key, a pause occurs in the action, immediately after receiving that portion which reads (in English translation), "The reasonable Creatures of the earth, or Man. Let them vex and weed out one another." An unidentified voice proceeds to explain that because of the transgression and fall of Adam, the Earth was accursèd for his sake, and "Keepers, Watch-men, and Princes" were set over her [*Ibid*, p 205]. As is too often the case, the statement appears more than a little ambiguous, but it appears to refer to the various spirits found in the Watchtowers, implying that in at least some cases they function somewhat like prison guards. Though it isn't stated explicitly, it is easy to imagine them in the role of agitators as well.

It is important to note that these dark hints apply to the Watchtowers, what collectively we know as "The Great Table". The body of material describing its nature and use is what the angels sometimes called the *Book of Enoch*, though the use of that term varies in the source material. On one such occasion, Dee seeks the counsel of the

archangel Michael concerning his business affairs back in England, himself being in Cracow at the time. He is instructed to bring his concerns before the angel set over that country, as found in the *Book of Enoch* [*Ibid*, p 394]. The archangel proceeds to warn Dee against seeking anything of worldly or human affairs in the Sigillum Dei Æmeth, another more planetary portion of the system. Michael calls the Watchtowers "worldly", and reminds Dee that they contain spirits both good and evil [*Ibid*].

So, we gather that the Earth is a prison, with Keepers, Watch-men, and Princes, and it is into this place that man was turned, as a result of the Fall. The Watchtowers themselves, elsewhere identified with the Earth, are shown to contain wicked Servants, and vile Slaves, as well as some good spirits, but all worldly, having no part of Heaven. Moreover, the four tablets signifying the Watchtowers are united by names that are extracted from those of the three Governors of the 10th Æthyr, and from this black crosse of union are drawn the names of wicked spirits and devils. And who was it that, according to the blessed angels, assailed Adam, and precipitated this Fall? Coronzon, of course [*Ibid*, p 92]. And incidentally, we appear to have learned that the Call of the 30 Aires is itself the malediction pronounced by God when he cursed the Earth for Adam's sake, as a consequence of the malice of that mighty Devil.

It seems a thin tissue of an argument, to be sure, but I feel that taken in its entirety, it is rather stronger than one might expect. The Earth, the Four Watchtowers, are essentially bound up with the three Governors of the 10th Æthyr. Even Dee suspected that something was up with ZAX, and repeated his suspicions to Ave, as we have seen above. In essence, we are presented with a riddle in the source material. To my mind, the angels and Crowley have supplied us with the answer to that riddle. It is C(h)oronzon that inhabits the 10th Æthyr. With this key piece of data in hand, all of the intimations of evil and wickedness associated with the black crosse, as well as the mixed natures of the Watchtowers, suddenly make sense.

SATYR

Epilogue: While preparing this and other materials, I revisited Tyson's book, and once again rejected his "Mr C is Lucifer" hypothesis. I am now more inclined to say he has a point, but I don't think it's that simple. First, Crowley describes the Four Evil Princes of this World descending through the outermost abyss, only one of which was named Lucifer. What says he of the others? His silence on the matter does not speak well of his hypothesis. Traditionally these four may only be summoned after experiencing Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, following the rationale behind the *Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*. This event occurs in Tiphareth,

where the pure lights of the Supernals converge upon the Adeptus Minor. The highest of these is Kether, and its single vertical descending ray—which I believe is related to the Daughter of Fortitude—is represented in the tarot as the Priestess of the Silver Star. By this power, the Adept commands the Princes, and it is efficacious because its point of origin lies beyond that of their "fall".

Applying this idea to the Four Watchers, or Four Mighty Kings of the Watchtowers of this World, it is easy to see that, if anything, Mr C may well be their Ruler, the spirit of Chaos that is the root cause of material existence. The Four may be much as Tyson says, upholding and ordering this little bubble of reality in which we live. Pure Chaos is exceptionally rare, as that new science tells us. Most of what we normally encounter is bounded chaos. Viewed in this light, this seems to agree with what the angels told Dee, of "Keepers, Watch-men, and Princes", placed over this world at the moment Adam fell. Budge speaks of a four headed deity of the Egyptians that appears to have been adopted and used by the Gnostics, and this may well be significant. Jones taught me to use inverted invoking spirit pentagrams for the 2^{nd} Key, four of them, one for each name of five letters on the Spirit Table, saying they were evil, but so is the 2^{nd} Key.

Mr C doesn't exist, in a way. It is the bogeyman that we create staring into the formless void of stochastic events, an epiphenomenon of the pure influence of the Supernals as it is ground down into matter. It is nonetheless the unadulterated embodiment of evil for the individual who experiences it directly.

[Ed's note—In Turner (p 54) and James (p 112) different sigils are given for Paraoan, but both are incorrect. Robert Turner's sigil on p 54 is that of "Laxdizi" (one of the three "regular" governors of the 22^{nd} Æthyr). It is unclear what Geoffrey James intends. In the original manuscript of Sloane 3191, under the section for the sigils of the 22^{nd} Æthyr LIN from "Liber Scientiæ, Auxilli, et Victoriæ Terrestris", folio 26^{v}, there was no sigil included for Paraoan.]

Why was the 10th Æthyr torn out of Crowley's Algerian notebook?

Hi Joel—(Just went down to get a cup of coffee, and saw a white-breasted nuthatch working-over the dead tree outside the kitchen window. Haven't seen one of those around here before. There's something fascinating about seeing a bird walk up and down a vertical surface like that. He was confidently making his way up the trunk: I'll take that as a good omen.)

I'm afraid you've lost me when you say, "And then, why exactly did he tear the 10th out of the MS. notebook, even if he edited it the day after why tear the original out?" I was under the impression that the record preserved in the notebook *was* the original. I have it somewhere, it being one of the few portions of his notebook that I copied from the microfilm. The hard copy I have includes the diagram of the Triangle, showing in a crude sketch the three dead pigeons at the three points, with Crowley's position in the center. This, I was told, was that which it was sought to conceal, that he acted as an old-fashioned trance medium for the operation, channelling Choronzon directly. When you read the Vision of the 10th, it is the only explanation that makes sense. The pages I have are hand-written, presumably by Neuburg. If it was instead a clear copy transcription, I wasn't made aware of this. So, yes, the microfilm, and what few pages I yet possess, are indeed from the original notebook, so far as I know. It was originally at the University of Texas at Austin, but I *assume* thugs from the [deleted for legal reasons—Ed] have long since spirited it away. Let me get back to you on this, as against my better judgment, I may start burrowing through my archives, and attempt to locate my pitifully partial copy. I'd hoped to dodge this one, but perhaps that is no longer an option. As it happens, the text of the Vision of ZAX was the only thing that I desired at the time, because it was proof that the story of Crowley "abiding apart" during Neuburg's ordeal was a lie.

SATYR

[Ed's note—Concerning theft of Crowley material from university archives, much has gone missing from the Warburg Institute in London, the Yorke collection is these days indicated on the shelves by place-markers, special permission being required to access the material. Much of this was doubtless stolen by people associated with a certain occult organisation, not mere souvenir collectors acting alone. It was even rumoured

last year that the Stèle of Revealing in the Boulak Museum in Cairo is actually a fake, with the original being salted away in a secret safe deposit box of said occult organisation. Note that *Liber AL* 3:10 actually instructs Crowley to steal the Stèle of Revealing and set it upon his own altar:

> Get the Stèle of Revealing itself; set it in thy secret temple—and that temple is already aright disposed—& it shall be your Kiblah for ever. It shall not fade, but miraculous colour shall come back to it day after day. Close it in locked glass for a proof to the world.

A copy of the Stèle is used in the Gnostic Mass. Kenneth Grant mentions on p 98 of *Hecate's Fountain* (London: Skoob Books Publishing, 1992) how in the 1920s Crowley had a plan for J F C Fuller to spirit away the Stèle of Revealing from the Boulak Museum, noting that "Fuller did not discover, until years after Crowley's death, that he had been earmarked to 'abstruct' the Stèle."]

Hi Satyr—It is the Weiser 1998 edition of *Liber 418* that says on p 159 and p 170 that the pages on the 10th were torn out of the notebook. The manuscript of this Æthyr surviving as I understand it is in fact the "revised and edited" version, the original pages torn out the notebook having been lost. (I had assumed Crowley tore them out himself, but it could have been a certain occult organisation much later I suppose). Now, this leads me to think that the version of events of the Call as we have them could well be a "creative reconstruction", which goes back to my question concerning how Crowley knew the 10th was accursèd. I am amused, incidentally, by your declaration that your notes on this issue are a "thin tissue of an argument", this is obviously what one says when one has constructed a rather persuasive case. Certainly it is a much-needed expansion on the rather brief and confusing note 2 about this that Crowley gives on p 159 on the Weiser 1998 *Vision and the Voice*, but also I do wonder whether Crowley had pieced it together so convincingly beforehand. In Algeria when he skryed the Æthyrs he had only his notebook with the Calls in it, he didn't have the Great Table, black crosse of union, or the orphaned letters of Paraoan to muse upon the meaning of. It may simply be the case that he fully expected to encounter Choronzon and that in preparing to meet this demon he essentially invoked him regardless of whether Choronzon is native to the 10th Æthyr or not. He had the name of Choronzon inscribed in Hebrew in the Triangle of Art, so it is hardly surprising that he should have encountered Choronzon in the 10th. That said, your argument makes much sense and it is always possible that Crowley had previously worked out this association, even though he doesn't appear to have written about it before the Algerian operations.

But what, for instance, if it never happened like it is written at all, that the version we have is solely a retrospective "revision and editing". Crowley doesn't say what the nature of the revision was. Now, there is a doubt in my mind about whether the operation happened exactly as published, due to the fact that these vital pages were apparently torn out and lost. This question seems important to me, it sort of gelled in my mind while thinking about the 10th and Choronzon.

The Weiser 98 edition I must say is very good, in the late 1980s I used the version from *Gems from the Equinox*, which omits most of the notes. The new Weiser edition has previously unpublished material, such as the diagram of circle and triangle from the 10th Æthyr, redrawn, plus the convenient inclusion of the relevant section from *Confessions*.

I confess I am uncertain what you mean about the "lie" of "abiding apart". What are you reading into this that I am missing exactly? When you say "because it was proof that the story of Crowley 'abiding apart' during Neuburg's ordeal was a lie"—do you mean that the wrestling match where Crowley-as-Choronzon broke the circle made you think there had been a lie? Or something else? I don't get what you mean because wasn't the version including the wrestling match included in the original *Equinox*? So why did you need "proof" if it was already extant in print? You have me confused. Are you saying that the extracts from the manuscript you have seen differ from the published version?

Now, are we going to say anything about Makhashanah? Is *Liber 418* called 418 because of Abrahadabra or because of Makhashanah? Does he say anything about Makhashanah anywhere else? A single reference in the 27th Æthyr of *Liber 418* and one in the Ab-ul-Diz Working seems sparse for such an important word.

Personally I feel Crowley wanted the 333 spelling of Choronzon rather than Dee's because that meant the reference to "dispersion" in the 28th could be seen as a prophecy of the 10th, even though he claims not to have known the correlation at the time. Or maybe he just preferred it to be 333, has a certain resonance.

Got the MP3 recordings of Crowley reciting the first and second Keys, hypnotic.

JOEL

Hi Joel—I hate to admit this, but haven't even seen the 1998 Weiser edition. The last "new" Caliphate OTO tome I acquired was His Holiness Hymenæus Beta's new-and-improved *Magick* (or *Book 4*, or whatever it's supposed to be called). It claimed to be the definitive scholarly edition, had to be special ordered here locally, and set me back about $50 US. I was so excited when it finally arrived, and decided to take the challenge

and compare its text against that of previous editions of the included material in my possession. After filling a sizable sheet with errata, I left-off the endeavor as entirely too infuriating an exercise.

I think the perpetrators of this heinous volume should be hauled in chains to some sufficiently academic institution, there to be publicly stoned, to discourage others from indulging in such editorial thuggery in the future. And thuggery it was, since I am under the impression that one can no longer obtain those inexpensive Dover editions of *Magick In Theory and Practice* because of their republication of this new and authoritative volume.

But now you've tempted me, and I may have to order this new edition of 418.

Perhaps "lie" is too strong a word, and perhaps I have made much of something itself no more than a mere ambiguity, that has been cleared-up in this latest edition of *The Vision and the Voice*. I don't know. As I say, I haven't seen it. David Jones brought to my attention that the text, as presented in *The Equinox* (Vol. I, No. V, "Special Supplement"), did not explicitly state that Crowley sat in the Triangle when the demon was evoked, though this is the only explanation that makes sense of the account. On p 93, it reads, when outlining the "precautions for the scribe":

> Now, then, the Seer being entered within the triangle, let him take the Victims and cut their throats, pouring the blood within the Triangle, and being most heedful that not one drop fall without the Triangle; or else Choronzon should be able to manifest in the universe.
>
> And when the sand hath sucked up the blood of the victims, let him recite the Call of the Æthyr apart secretly as aforesaid. Then will the Vision be revealed, and the Voice heard.

Now, this is in agreement with what I was told, at least nominally, assuming that "secretly" implies that he hadn't left the triangle after murdering the hapless pigeons (one must wonder what the Seer did with the knife after he was through. I can't imagine a sane operator under the circumstances allowing the medium to retain any sharp objects whatsoever). But then on the page following, a parenthetical remark is inserted which states: "Here the Spirit simulated the voice of Frater P., which also appeared to come from his station and not from the triangle." This seems to conflict with the idea that Crowley was himself corporeally in the Triangle at that time, don't you think? As I say, if they've faithfully reproduced the diagram I've seen from the notebook, this ambiguity should be cleared up straight away, since that drawing clearly showed the Seer's station to be in the Triangle of Art, and doubtless the editors of this latest edition have either amended the original text, or at least noted this inconsistency.

If such is the case, then I can see now why I've led you to confusion on the matter with my raving on about lies and chicanery. I don't doubt that Neuburg and Mr C had their little tussle in the sand. That much seems obvious from the text as given. However, it does seem that Mr C did not wish to leave the reader of the *Equinox* version of the story with the impression that it had been the intention of our two heroes to have Crowley channel Choronzon from the beginning.

I was led to believe that this was a secret known to few students in the Order, back in 1990, and that the establishment would just as soon keep it that way. Whether they did not wish to promote this sort of practice in general, or they did not like the doubts it might cast upon Crowley and his subsequent work, or some other reason entirely, I cannot say. I do feel confident that this was in Jones's mind when he volunteered to sit in the Triangle himself during that evocation of Paimon.

Crowley does mention Makhashanah in another place, as I discovered yesterday while looking into the Choronzon question. In *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, while discussing possible proof that might be had that a given vision is genuine, he says:

> Let me give one example. The Angel of the twenty-seventh Æthyr said: "The word of the Aeon is MAKHASHANAH." I immediately discredited him; because I knew that the word of the Aeon was, on the contrary, ABRAHADABRA. Inquiry by the Holy Cabala then showed me that the two words had the same numerical value, 418. The apparent blunder was thus an absolute proof that the Angel was right. Had he told me that the word was ABRAHADABRA, I should have thought nothing of it, arguing that my imagination might have put the words in his mouth. [p 617]

It's not, I fear, quite the kind of mention you had in mind, but there it is. Seems to pass off the whole thing as inconsequential at best.

I agree that Crowley has altered the spelling of Choronzon so it might be summed to 333. But why 333? It's a nice enough number, to be sure, but I'm afraid I don't quite follow how the reference in the 28th (which I think does foreshadow Choronzon in the 10th) makes the number 333 somehow more desirable. I looked at *Sepher Sephiroth*, and found the following entered under "333":

> Qabalah of the Nine Chambers AIQ BKR
> Choronzon [vide Dr Dee, & Lib. 418, 10th Aire] ChVRVNZVN (f)
> Snow ShLG

Surprised to find no mention of "dispersion", at all. *Sepher Sephiroth* was originally begun by Allan Bennett, and subsequently enlarged by Crowley and others before being

published in *The Equinox*. It is possible, therefore, that this particular spelling originated with someone other than Crowley himself, at a date much earlier than 1909 (in his introductory remarks, he says that he inherited the material in 1899).

The MP3 recordings of Crowley's Enochian are hypnotic, aren't they? They are much better than I remember them. I tend to "vibrate" the god names embedded in the Keys a bit like he does, it seems.

SATYR

Hi Satyr—Re: "Here the Spirit simulated the voice of Frater P., which also appeared to come from his station and not from the triangle." This sentence still appears in the Weiser 98 edition, but it goes uncommented upon. I agree, if the diagram wasn't present then it wouldn't be too clear that Choronzon was the possessed Crowley in the Triangle.

The intro has the Seer retiring to a "secret place", indicating that perhaps they simply didn't originally want to let on that he was in the Triangle. The text doesn't make this clear at all, but the diagram does. Strikes me that Crowley was attempting to preserve ambiguity on the fact that Choronzon was himself possessed, thus putting at arms length how exactly Choronzon manifested without actually lying about it (it's a "secret place" because without the diagram you don't realise he is actually in the Triangle). Surprisingly this is not commented on in the Weiser 98 edition, despite the fact that the diagram is there making it clear. I guess they are just leaving it to the readers to work out for themselves. Interesting you say that this was regarded as a kind of OTO insider's secret back in 1990. I can't even remember what I thought was going on in that Æthyr back when I read it in *Gems from the Equinox* in the late 80s, but the Weiser 98 edition is a great improvement and it has certainly become lately one of my most thumbed through books.

Actually, thumbing through it once again, reading the 10th most carefully for the umpteenth time, I notice a note of Crowley's concerning his retiring to a secret place and secretly invoking the Æthyr sitting within his black robe, p 160 n3:

> The greatest precautions were taken at the time, and have since been yet further fortified, to Keep Silence concerning the Rite of Evocation. The Major Adept is warned most seriously against attempting to emulate this operation, which is (in any case) improper for him to perform. To call forth Choronzon, unless one be wholly above the Abyss, is to ensure the most appalling and immediate catastrophe.

So this appears to explain why Crowley didn't spell out that he was sitting in the Triangle of Art, he presents himself as wishing to conceal the precise manner in which Choronzon

was called ostensibly to protect others from repeating his practice. He is "Keeping Silence". This would also explain why the 10th was edited and revised the day after, to edit out references that made it clear that Choronzon was Crowley possessed by the demon, except for the previously unpublished diagram. It makes sense now. Ah well, we have got somewhere. It seems strangely obvious all of a sudden. I suppose my not remembering the confusion inherent in previous published versions of *Liber 418*, and not realising there was anything here that constituted something of an informal OTO "secret", and you not realising the diagram with the Seer in the Triangle had now been published, enabled us in the end to see what was clear all along but had been purposefully occulted.

This is corroborated by a sentence on p 165:

> This last was spoken from the triangle in the natural voice of the Frater, which Choronzon again simulated. But he did not succeed in taking the Frater's form—which was absurd!

Here Crowley is having a bit of a joke, and he appends a note to the above statement: "In this Æthyr are certain silences maintained." Clearly he is using the term "Silence" in its technical occult usage, ie lying through one's teeth. In *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* I see now that he states: "During all this time I had astrally identified myself with Choronzon, so that I experienced each anguish, each rage, each despair, each insane outburst." Given such clues, it is odd that it took until 1998 before the charade was publicly ended.

Interesting point you make about what Crowley did with the dagger after slaughtering the pigeons. He couldn't exactly throw it outside the Triangle could he, because that would be allowing some of the sacrificial blood to fall outside of the Triangle, thus allowing Choronzon to manifest in the Universe. As for its present whereabouts, Kenneth Grant claims to have it. There's material on the later history of this magical dagger in Grant's *Hecate's Fountain* (p 5 and pp 11–12). Apparently it "accidentally" featured in a number of Grant's New Isis Lodge rituals (which may or may not have taken place solely in Mr Grant's mind). There's a photograph of it in his *Outside the Circles of Time*.

As for Makhashanah, I can't blame Crowley for relegating his "Word of the Aeon" to the status of inconsequentiality, after all I have done precisely the same with Jubalcain. It appears Crowley regarded Makhashanah as merely a coded form of Abrahadabra rather than a word in its own right, not considering that it was Abrahadabra that should have been sidelined. I guess he found that difficult because Abrahadabra is enshrined in *Liber AL*, but even so how could he keep a straight face proclaiming Abrahadabra as any kind of magick word.

As for why 333, merely being half of 666 makes it attractive enough I would have thought. But interesting its equivalence with “dispersion” goes unremarked upon in *Sepher Sephiroth*. I think you may have a point about the Choronzon spelling potentially being bequeathed to Crowley by Allan Bennett on the latter’s departure to Ceylon in 1899, I hadn’t considered that. Of course we don’t know whether “Choronzon” was included in Bennett’s original material or was a later addition.

Interesting that in the “Note by Scribe” (p 171, Weiser 98) Neuburg says: “The account of the further dealings of Choronzon with the Scribe will be found in the Record of Omnia Vincam.” A note says this is not believed to be extant. One wonders whether Victor Neuburg Jnr might have it, if he’s still alive. Did I tell you I met him in the 80s?

JOEL

“it shall become full of beetles…”

Hi Satyr—Re-reading *The Vision and the Voice* I couldn’t help but think that it is to an extent tainted by the “revelations” of *Liber AL*. Not entirely fresh but force-fitted into his established worldview. *The Book of the Law*, when examined, is hardly anything more than a cut-up of phrases and personages from the catalogue entry for Exhibit 666 at the Boulak Museum, Cairo, 1904, combined with a will to world occult domination with a pseudo-Apocalyptic flavour coupled with a recent reading of Rabelais still fresh in the mind, but even then it is hardly a “breakthrough in gray room”.

Liber AL has little binding or profound vision holding it together, all it is is a first try by someone who really pulled it off five years later, but by that time the die was cast. Hard to avoid the leakage of one’s own stuff into genuinely channelled material, that I certainly realise, every ardent UFO believer channels aliens to voice the message. Though the visions of *Liber 418* are to me very genuine despite this, the authenticity of a vision I feel is nonetheless marked by how much of one’s own stuff one manages to keep out. Which is probably reflective of depth of trance. Now Crowley of course thought his *Liber AL* and Ra-Hoor-Khuit and Stèle of Revealing and all that was a universal truth, so to have it swilling around in the background of his Algerian visions probably didn’t seem like an imposition, rather a confirmation of the authenticity of the newly skryed material. But to me, who doesn’t see it that way, who sees *Liber AL* as a transitory inspiration blown out of all proportion to its actual worth and built up into something

that cannot now be admitted to be second rate without an immense loss of face by those who have accorded it canonical authority, it is evidence of Crowley contaminating his Algerian visions with his own stuff.

And it's strange that *Liber AL* is universally accepted by Thelemites as some mega-scripture whereas the vastly superior *Liber 418* is almost regarded as supplementary material, a *mere book*, rather than his actual magnum opus of magical attainment (a gay Thelemite friend sees this as a heterosexual/homosexual issue: Rose Kelly acceptable, Victor Neuburg unacceptable, in the eyes of the conservative straight-laced OTO Scatter-Monkeys left to run the show when their Alpha Male fell out the tree and bit the dust). What's worse is that Thelemites who themselves don't understand *Liber AL*—save as a schizophrenic can read meaning into words and numbers on a bus ticket—have a tendency to superciliously regard anyone who dares to criticise it as simply uninitiated, tapping their noses knowingly as if they themselves have penetrated its concealed mysteries, yet how many of them have published their own treatise on the nature of the Universe or other mystical subject, a basic requirement as I understand it in the A∴A∴ as proof of worth and magical advancement.

I have decided my favourite line from *The Book of the Law*: "it shall become full of beetles…" (III, 25). A much-ignored line I feel.

JOEL

Joel—On the "beetles" thing, Crowley comments:

> These beetles, which appeared with amazing suddenness in countless numbers at Boleskine during the summer of 1904 ev, were distinguished by a long single horn, the species was new to the naturalists in London to whom specimens were sent for classification. [Israel Regardie, ed. *The Law Is For All*. Phoenix, Arizona: Falcon, 1986, p 285]

And in the *Autohagiography*:

> As to this perfume of *The Book of the Law*, "let it be laid before me, and kept thick with perfumes of your orison: it shall become full of beetles as it were and creeping things sacred unto me." One day, to my amazement, having gone into the bathroom to bathe, I discovered a beetle. As I have said, I take no interest in natural history and know nothing of it.
>
> But this beetle attracted my attention at once. I had never seen anything like it before. It was about an inch and a half long and had a single horn nearly as long as itself. The

> horn ended in a small sphere suggestive of an eye. From that moment, for about a fortnight, there was an absolute plague of these beetles. They were not merely in the house, they were on the rocks, in the gardens, by the sacred spring, everywhere! But I never saw one outside the estate. I sent a specimen to London but the experts were unable to identify the species.
>
> Here was a tangible piece of Magick. It ought to have convinced me that *The Book of the Law* meant business. Instead, it left me absolutely cold. I experienced a certain proud glee, much as I had in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid, but there it stopped. I took the necessary measures to protect Rose against the murderous attack of Mathers, and went on playing billiards. [*Confessions*, pp 408–409]

Whenever I find myself about to take Crowley's statements, any statement, literally and at face value, I remind myself of past experience, and immediately check myself. In this case, I take it this way: "perfumes of your orison" is obviously semen in some form, and under those circumstances (astral) things would be creeping all over the damned place.

Not sure if I'm playing devil's advocate in all this, or how you'll react to any particular statement I might make that appears to defend Crowley's cause. I agree with the concept of "Class A" material, and would take far more exception to his shenanigans if he did not include portions of *The Vision and the Voice* as also being "Class A", some of the other Holy Books (like *ARARITA*), *Revelation*, probably *Ezekiel*, at least part of it, and other similar documents. Consider the oldest layer of the *Yi*. May it be changed, be it no more than the shape of a letter? What of that book by Lao Dan? To my mind, whether *Liber AL* is also "Class A" is neither here nor there. Perhaps it was a received text, perhaps not. He says it was, but he also says *The Vision and the Voice* was as well. The latter seems indeed to be the case, and since parts of *Liber AL* appear to be at obvious variance with Crowley at the time of its reception, it is possible it was too. Or I am at least forced to admit the possibility. That I think is the real message of *The Book of the Law*: If you try hard enough, you can really talk to God (or Heaven, or whatever we mean by some cognate term).

If his work, by hook or by crook, forces a body to think it might be possible to forge one's own individual and unique link with Heaven (the Divine, the HGA), then it is justified. Right now, the folks that have seized control over his estate have turned that work into a money-making machine and petty power brokerage firm. The money changers have once again occupied the courts of the temple, as indeed they have before. It happens. Blast away, if you will.

SATYR

PS: If you are at all interested in Bible references in *Liber AL*, note that II, v 23 appears to be very similar to *Isaiah* 63:3. II, v 57 is a direct quote of *Revelation* 22:11. The directions for the "cakes of light" (*Liber AL* III, v 23), may be compared to *Leviticus* 2, *Chronicles* 31, and most especially *Ezekiel* 16. It seems to me there were others, but they now escape me. How many Thelemites know this much Judæo-Christianity has crept into their "new" religion, their big break with the establishment?

Hi Satyr—Well, interested that there was a story behind the beetles after all. Many years ago I walked up "Little Bread Loaf Hill", El Panecillo, in Quito, Ecuador. Quite a steep trudge in the thin high Andean air. At the top is an immense metal statue of La Virgen de Quito—an angel-winged Virgin—dominating the old city, but what has stuck in my mind far more is that the ground surrounding the statue was covered in a thick layer of hundreds if not thousands of dead large iridescent-blue beetles over quite a large area. It was an amazing sight, such that one could not approach the statue without walking over the beetles, which I didn't do as some may still have been alive. Dung beetles I believe they were. It would be interesting to know whether this was unusual or a common occurrence there, it was certainly unusual to me and I thought about it for days afterwards.

Indeed, just a few days afterwards I was involved in a train crash high in the Andes mountains on the "autoferro", which is a dieselbus on a railway line. The autoferro hit the previous autoferro that had broken an axle and come off the tracks but presumably hadn't been reported yet, and the collision left us hanging over the side of a mountain. Most curious was that on the way up into the mountains there were many crosses of people who had died at the edge of the narrow line twisting around and around the mountains into the developing mist and drizzle. We eventually came to a railside shrine to the Virgin Mary at which we stopped and a collection was taken for the poor, and as a blessing and protection for us, which was deposited in the glass case of the shrine. After the crash we stumbled out of the autoferro and I was greeted by another sight I will never forget, night was falling and the air was alive with fireflies, which I had never seen before, and as the eye gradually followed them up they gave way to my first real view of the southern hemisphere's stars, so many more than I was used to seeing in the northern hemisphere.

When I was stood looking at the twisted rails talking to a Frenchman about the crash, I said: "So much for the collection at the Virgin's shrine." And he said: "I was thinking just the opposite." And of course I realised he was quite right, and I just sat down and lay back and looked at the stars, not at all perturbed by our predicament, in a state, I think, of Grace.

But I didn't choose the *Liber AL* sentence about the beetles thinking of that, I have only just been reminded of that on reading the comment of Crowley's concerning the beetles, which I suppose is interesting in itself. Crowley's comment is fascinating. I can quite imagine that he would package up an unusual beetle and send it to the entomology department at the Natural History Museum for analysis, which is where he probably sent it. Curious to see whether they still have the specimen and his covering letter.

JOEL

[Ed's note— La Virgen de Quito is actually the woman from *Revelation* 12, she has a crown of 12 stars and stands on the dragon which she binds in chains.]

Tyson's theory Crowley used the 19th Key in English not Enochian

Hi Satyr—Donald Tyson in *Enochian Magic for Beginners* (pp 55–56) says it is not clear to him whether Crowley used the Enochian or the English version of the 19th Key for sounding the Æthyrs. Tyson mentions that Crowley speaks in his *Confessions* of "changing two names" in the Key for each Æthyr, so Tyson thinks this means he could have used English rather than Enochian. He writes:

> In the English version, two words must be changed for each Æthyr, but in the Enochian version, only one word. So perhaps Crowley invoked the Æthyrs using the English version of the nineteenth Key.

What's your opinion of this?

JOEL

Hi Joel—The most puzzling aspect of Tyson's statement is, "In the English version, two words must be changed for each Æthyr, but in the Enochian version, only one word". What the hell does he mean, "two words"? I've puzzled over this for a while now, and still have no answer. For that matter, what did Crowley mean when he said much the same thing? I found the relevant passage in *The Hag*, by the way:

> There are nineteen of these Keys: the first two conjuring the element called Spirit; the next sixteen invoke the Four Elements, each subdivided into four; the nineteenth, by changing two names, may be used to invoke any one of what are called the thirty "Æthyrs" or "Aires".
>
> What these are is difficult to say. In one place we are told that they are "Dominion extending in ever widening circles without and beyond the Watch Towers of the Universe", these Watch Towers composing a cube of infinite magnitude. Elsewhere, we find that the names of the angels which govern them are contained in the Watch Towers themselves; but (most disconcerting disenchantment!) they are identified with various countries of the earth, Styria [*sic*], Illyria, etc, as if "aire" simply meant *clime*. I have always maintained the first definition. I suspected Kelly of finding Dee unsupportable at times, with his pity, pedantry, credulity, respectability and lack of humour. I could understand that he broke out and made fun of the old man by spouting nonsense. [*Confessions*, p 612]

I have compared this statement with the G∴D∴ "Book of the Concourse of the Forces", and can find no precedent, nor is there any indication of changing two words in Crowley's notebook, "The Forty-Eight Calls or Keys", which I am led to believe he had with him in Algeria as mentioned in *The Hag* [*Ibid*, p 611]. It appears upon inspection to be a straightforward transcription of the G∴D∴ instruction as he would have received it, with some relatively minor glosses, emendations, and additions.

From a textual standpoint, at least as I read it, Tyson hasn't a leg to stand on. Crowley uses the word "Enochian" to denote the language, not as a general term for the system as a whole, as is common today. The word appears twice in *The Hag* prior to his description of the general method used to invoke the Æthyrs:

> These Keys or Calls being rewritten backwards, there appeared conjurations in a language which they called "Enochian" or Angelic. It is not a jargon; it has a grammar and syntax of its own. It is very much more sonorous, stately and impressive than even Greek or Sanskrit, and the English translation, though in places difficult to understand, contains passages of a sustained sublimity that Shakespeare, Milton and the Bible do not surpass. To condemn Kelly as a cheating charlatan—the accepted view—is simply stupid. If he invented Enochian and composed the superb prose, he was at worst a Chatterton with fifty times that poet's ingenuity and five hundred times his poetical genius. [*Ibid*, p 612]

Comparing this with the methodology he later describes, "… I would take this stone and recite the Enochian Key…" [*Ibid*, p 616], it seems obvious to me that by "Enochian Key" he intends "Enochian version of the Key", as opposed to the English.

Y'know, sometimes I impress even myself. Wandered downstairs to stuff a pill down

the cat's throat and prepare another cup of coffee, and while mulling over the possibility we were looking at a typographical error, thought to look in *The Equinox*, at Crowley's "official" presentation of the 48 Keys. It seems that this document is an almost exact transcription from his notebook, which I suppose isn't that surprising, really. The most obvious differences being that the Enochian versions of the Keys are not presented interlineally in the Angelic character as they are in the notebook, and in his transcriptions in Latin character, the zeds are not expanded into "zod", as was taught in the G∴D∴ system.

On the first page of "The Call or Key of the Thirty Æthyrs" two footnotes appear ("A Brief Abstract of the Symbolic Representation of the Universe Derived by Doctor John Dee Through the Skrying of Sir Edward Kelly: Part II: The Forty-Eight Calls". *The Equinox*, Vol. I, No. VIII. New York: Weiser, 1972. p 125, n1 and n2). The first, on the word LIL, reads: "Or other Aire as may be willed." The other glosses the word IDOIGO, stating: "This name may be appropriately varied with the Aire." I think that rather solves our mystery, and in so doing speaks to any questions concerning the quality of our Mr Tyson's scholarship as well. It seems now that his entire argument falls flat, as by his own reasoning, the Enochian version of the Key is most assuredly what Crowley intended.

Incidentally, *The Goetia* was published by Crowley in 1904, complete with the conjurations and such translated into Enochian. Again, it is just silly, or divisive, to assert that he would not have used that language when reciting the Call of the Thirty Aires. Well, I've had my fun for the morning, and it's back to work.

SATYR

Hi Satyr—As soon as you mentioned *Idoigo* I recalled reading this years ago, which surprises me since I never thought I took much interest in Enochian back then and can't think where I would have read it.

On "two words must be changed", Tyson may be relying on Geoffrey James's book, which does indeed give the impression that two words need to be changed in the English version of the Key, both the name of the Aire and its ordinal number. Although in Tyson's own version of the 19th Key he doesn't makes James's error and only one word has to be changed in the English version, such that it is hard to see what he is talking about. Seems to me he may have formed his impression concerning the change of two words by studying James initially, even though an ordinal number is hardly a "name", and has simply never revisited his thoughts on the matter. Stupid as it sounds, I can't think how else his statement could be accounted for.

If you were to change *Idoigo*, incidentally, what is the full range of alternatives? This goes back to those Enochian words I earlier mentioned to you as looking and sounding like names. But does Crowley give any indication of alternatives to *Idoigo*?

JOEL

Hi Joel—I understand what you're saying about his changing "two words". Call me old fashioned, but Tyson's interpretation would require altering the received text. In that scan I sent you, Dee wrote as clearly as his crabby scrawl would allow "O you heuens which dwell in the first Ayre, are Mightie in the partes of the Erth…" and this agrees so far as I know with what the angels told him. I see no LIL to be changed when opening an Æthyr other than the 1st, not in the English version. If what you're saying is indeed the case, his argument is even more ludicrous than I'd thought.

You recall the two words changed in the Enochian version of the 19th because the two footnotes are faithfully reproduced in *Gems From the Equinox: Instructions by Aleister Crowley for His Own Magickal Order* (Israel Regardie [ed]. Phoenix, Arizona: Falcon, 1986. p 428). I remember you saying that was your first working text of the material, just as it was for me. I should have remembered myself, considering how many times I've read that page, and it was so obvious after I'd found it. *Idoigo* is the name on the vertical portion of the "cherubic cross" in the upper left corner of the upper left quadrant of "The Great Table" (see Turner, pp 59, 60, and 66–68). I don't quite follow Crowley's reasoning, though. Why not use the "god name" from the sub-quadrant associated with a Governor of that particular Æthyr?

SATYR

The Black Room, the Chamber of Death, and the Red Room

by Joel Biroco, Jac Partit, & John Day

Crowley's plagiarism of the 18° Ancient and Accepted Rite for the OTO 5°—& the demonic doorknocker on the Red Room at 10 Duke Street, St James's, London

Having noticed that Aleister Crowley had substantially based the OTO 5° on the 18° of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite—the Order of the Rose Croix of Heredom in which the Knighthood of the Pelican and Eagle is conferred—I showed a copy of Crowley's ritual from Francis King's *The Secret Rituals of the OTO* to "Jac Partit" (a pseudonym), an Englishman who is himself 18°, an occultist, and an initiate of a number of esoteric freemasonic orders, and asked for his comments. His correspondence I then relayed to "John Day" (a pseudonym), a member of the Caliphate OTO in the United States, for criticism. The subsequent debate continued back and forth for several rounds, and is published below. The debate centres on the idea that the 18° contains Christian symbolism that Crowley failed to wholly expunge in his reworking of the rite, and as such its narrative integrity is seriously flawed, meaning that the potential effect of the OTO ritual is questionable. It should be noted that Christian symbolism in the 18° does not necessarily mean that it is *ipso facto* "Christian". In fact, Francis King in *Ritual Magic in England* (1970) expressed the opinion that the rite was *anti*-Christian, he quoted an anonymous "anti-Masonic writer" he said he himself was inclined to agree with who called the rite "a little sinister" and stated that the 18° or Rose-Croix degree "carried the unfortunate suggestion that the death of Satan was being mourned". It's been many years since I read Walton Hannah, but that sounds like a quote from him. H T F Rhodes in his excellent book *The Satanic Mass* (1954), relying on the 1926 private printing of the 18° ritual, extracts of which had been reproduced by Walton Hannah in *Darkness Visible* (1951), explicitly linked the rite to the Black Mass in his chapter entitled "The Devil and the Freemasons".

Rhodes, after describing the 18° ritual, calls the theology represented in the ceremony "fundamentally un-Christian and even anti-Christian". But he goes further:

> It is a little disconcerting to find that the preposterous Bataille was right, if for all the wrong and most discreditable reasons, when he approximated the Freemason's god to Lucifer.

Dr Bataille, in Rhode's view in an earlier chapter, had sensationally represented the freemasonic Knights of the Rose Croix of Heredom trampling over the crucifix on their way to the Satanic Holy of Holies. Rhodes ends his chapter on the 18° in no uncertain terms:

> On this evidence, Freemasonry has the curious distinction of having kept alive, until the present day, the traditions of the 'Mass of Vain Observance'. It is hoped that this can be said without offence to some 4,000,000 of our fellow-countrymen who, in spite of this, do not seem to be committed to a greater extent than the rest of us to a 'Satanic' way of life.

One of the most interesting aspects of the ritual from my own perspective, and one not mentioned by Rhodes though arguably it might support his case even more, is where the candidate, standing in the darkness of the corridor from the Black Room and Chamber of Death, knocks to be admitted to the Red Room, which is brilliantly lit with red furnishings. Thirty-three red candles in candlesticks, arranged in the shape of three inverted triangles on an eight-step white altar, burn like a hearth surrounding the white Cubic Stone on the fourth step, and 18 red roses are displayed between them. (The "Cubic Stone" is said to represent the Christian cross, because a cube when opened out into two-dimensional space becomes a cross. In the 18° rite the Cubic Stone "poured forth blood and water". This same inspiration is behind the name of "The Order of the Cubic Stone", an occult order practising Enochian magick that was founded in Wolverhampton, England, in the 1960s by Robert Turner and others.)

In the basement of the Supreme Council for the 33° at 10 Duke Street, St James's, London—where the most impressive manifestation of "the Black Room, the Chamber of Death, and the Red Room" may be found—the door knocker of the Red Room is a horned and cloven-hoofed demon with one leg crossed over the other, based on the "Lincoln Imp" in Lincoln Cathedral. The password to enter the Red Room is "Abaddon". Abaddon is mentioned once in the King James version of the Bible, in *Revelation* 9:11. The following is *Rev*. 9:7–11:

> And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

Although Abaddon is named only once in the King James version, the actual Hebrew word (אבדון) occurs five times in the *Old Testament*, where it is translated not as the name of a destroying angel but simply as "destruction"—in *Job* 28:22; 31:12; 26:6; *Proverbs* 15:11; 27:20. In the last three of these passages the Revised Version retains the word "Abaddon" as a name. Presumably Abaddon is therefore also intended to be the name of the demon on the doorknocker to the Red Room. I asked Jac Partit to briefly describe the rite:

> The ritual of the 18th degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite takes place in the three rooms you describe. As a knight of the East and the West the candidate is escorted into the Black Room which is placed in time after the death and burial of Christ and the focus is on death. The Chamber of Death is where the candidate is placed to reflect on death and the emblems of mortality. The Red Room is then reached by passing through a door on which a knocker is placed in the shape of an elemental demon. This is the guardian who must be overcome to ascend to the next level—"Demon est deus inversus", "the Devil is God inversed"—we move from duality to the perfection of unity. The Red Room is where the 18°—the Knighthood of the Pelican and Eagle and perfection of the red cross—are conferred. The sequence of the colours black, white, red are the threefold alchemical path from nigredo (putrefaction), to albino (resurrection) to rebredo (perfection). As an aside that is why a Cardinal wears red—he has achieved "spiritual perfection".

As I considered further the claims made by Rhodes and Hannah that the 18° was "Satanic" in character, I asked Jac Partit to comment from his perspective as an insider to the rite:

> The view that the 18^{th} degree is somehow Satanic presumably is based on Hannah's remarks. If King and Rhodes cover other areas than those I consider then can you highlight them. Hannah raises three pieces of evidence:

1. The use of the word Abaddon.

2. That the ceremony of the Black Room describes the crucifixion to be a "dire calamity" because of the defeat of Satan.

3. The agape of the third point. An important factor here is to distinguish between an orthodox and heterodox viewpoint. As a Catholic priest, Hannah would have been a supporter of the one, holy, and undivided orthodox Catholic church led by the Pope as the source of doctrinal authority. He condemns freemasonry as heterodox, that is heretical, because it deviates from accepted doctrine (this has been stated in four papal Bulls—most recently that of Leo XII in 1884), most particularly because it promotes syncretism. This is because freemasonry in general holds that all faiths can participate in its rituals and that all are equal paths to the GAOTU ["Great Architect of the Universe"—Ed]. That it is a latter-day mystery cult.

Hannah's three points can be addressed as follows:

1. Abaddon is from *Revelation* 9:11. He is the Angel of the bottomless pit. Its relevance is to the doctrinal significance of the three days that Christ was dead following the crucifixion and before the resurrection. This period has been described as the harrowing of Hell and was the subject of much art during the medieval age—it alludes to the view that those in Hell would be redeemed by Christ. Esoterically it concerns the doctrine that to pass into a higher world the initiate must overcome his shadow form—the dweller on the threshold—which symbolises our material base nature and attitudes. By knowing his name the candidate has brought his own "demon" under control. He is not worshipped or used as a source of power.

2. The Black Room is part of a mystery play. It represents the moment of the crucifixion and the loss at that point is mourned. As is the case in church services on Good Friday the vestments are black and the attitude is one of loss. The ritual of the Red Room makes clear that it is in the mystical Christ that the candidate is perfected. Hannah has no mystical insight into the symbolism. Again I would say that the ritual is probably heretical but not Satanic.

3. The third point uses neither a consecrated host nor a parody of the Mass. It is a ritual meal founded on the principles of fraternity. I would also argue that the known authors of the ritual were Christian mystics and thaumaturgists.

JAC PARTIT

There is no mention of the demonic doorknocker in the official rite privately printed for the Supreme Council (I have the 1994 revision, which runs to 73 A6 pages, 1995 is the latest), but it has long retained my fascination since first hearing about it, over and above the perhaps more weighty matters now to be discussed. Namely, that Aleister Crowley substantially plagiarised the 18° ritual when constructing his 5° ritual for the Ordo Templi Orientis. For reasons of space (and copyright) I am unable to reproduce the two rituals, but interested parties should have little difficulty following the argument or tracking down the appropriate source materials. I am in any case primarily motivated to publish a debate on this matter by two informed insiders, rather than pursue the cheaper practice of publishing the rituals of secret societies as if such two-bit detective work was somehow impressive. Here follows Jac Partit's considered opinion on the central problem with the OTO 5°.

JOEL BIROCO

Jac Partit's initial salvo

Back to the OTO fifth degree. I won't go through a word for word comparison because you will be able to do this with the 1994 ritual [of the 18°]. To me the 5° seems so totally flawed as to raise the possibility that it has a completely destructive effect. This is because the fundamental structure is unchanged—rather than redesign the building the OTO have rearranged the mantelpiece.

The ritual had its foundation in one Willermoz, a Christian Thaumaturgist and Martinist of Lyon. Therefore the 18° temple was set out to correspond to the Christian passion. The OTO have not fundamentally changed this. For example the pelican is Christ crucified and the eagle Christ in his ascension. These are unchanged. The numbers 33 etc and colours are Christian and one has to ask whether the trampling of the cross and presence of the priestess are any more than window dressing. Indeed the failure to realign the symbolic structure means that conflicting currents are worked. You will see that the sections of the *New Testament* have been removed yet no alternative is put in their place—the reference to the rending of the temple is again a Christian one.

The lost word in the first point in the 18° is INRI, which is a formula alluding to the lost word and far more numinous than the approach introduced by the OTO. The obligation is pure masonry.

The rest of the second point is more a series of exchanges with a catechism. The sealing of the candidate in the OTO misunderstands that the seal is undertaken so that

the mark is perceived on the astral plane. The subsequent tattoo that is recommended is unnecessary—for those that can observe will see.

The OTO third point is a travesty and has no sense of the secular communion of the 18th degree.

3/10 if that.

JAC PARTIT

The crimson flame

There is another aspect of the original 18° ritual that has always fascinated me—the use of a strontium salt dissolved in spirit in the chalice, which when ignited produces a crimson flame, strontium being the only element to produce such a vivid crimson flame, much as copper produces a green flame and sodium an orange flame. This was mentioned by H T F Rhodes, information he appeared to have obtained from Walton Hannah's *Darkness Visible*, a 1951 exposé of freemasonry (which was countered in 1952 by a delightfully vitriolic little book called *Light Invisible* written by a freemason spitting blood under the pseudonym of "Vindex", who said Mr Hannah should be "horse-whipped"). I asked Jac Partit about the use of strontium:

> I have just checked Walton Hannah and it is he who talks about the use of strontium in the fire ignited in the third point—when the word is returned to the celestial realm. We no longer use strontium in the UK. Hannah's comments on the degree display an astonishing ignorance of mystical Christianity which I suppose I should have expected. More than happy to comment further when you have received some response [from John Day]—I suspect that many OTO initiates are simply unaware of how poor an interpretation it is and how much is unchanged from the 18th degree.

JB

John Day's response to Partit

In my self-appointed role as advocate for the opposition, I thought it best to begin with first principles, and thus my initial considerations have centred on the following statement made by Jac Partit:

> The ritual had its foundation in one Willermoz, a Christian Thaumaturgist and Martinist of Lyon. Therefore the 18° temple was set out to correspond to the Christian passion.

I've been looking into this Willermoz fellow, and he led an interesting life in truly fascinating times. But what little information I have does not necessarily imply that he was the originator of the Rose-Croix of Heredom.

According to Waite's *A New Encyclopædia of Freemasonry*, under the heading "Emperors of the East and West":

> The full title of this, the first masonic system which superposed a colossal series of Grades upon the Craft Rite, was COUNCIL of the Emperors of the East and West, Sovereign Prince Masons, Substitutes General of the Royal Art, Grand Surveillants and Officers of the Grand Sovereign Lodge of St. John of Jerusalem. It was otherwise and in more concise terms the RITE OF HEREDOM OR OF PERFECTION. It was founded at Paris in or about 1758 and consisted in all of twenty-five Degrees. We know nothing concerning the circumstances of its origin or the persons connected therewith. The suggestion that it was a daughter of the CHAPTER OF CLERMONT or a transfiguration and extension of that body has been made in plausible terms, but nothing approaching evidence comes forward to support it. [...] Every question is open, moreover, as to the Grade content of the CLERMONT CHAPTER. While it is difficult under such circumstances to hold any view—however tentatively—one inference from what I must call tradition on the subject makes it appear that the Chapter was Templar in its High Grade developments while the Council at its inception was not. The Council also was the first Continental Rite which included the Grade of ROSE-CROIX in its system. [...]
>
> Story of the Rite.—Wheresoever it came from, the presence of the Rose-Croix in this sequence is the key to its importance as a system, while next in consequence thereto is the GRADE OF KADOSH. So far as it is possible to say, we hear of neither independently prior to 1758, except in spurious legend or traditional history. If the Council came forth ready made at that date, in all its Ritual panoply, we can understand the success which seems to have attended it for a period. It appears—within a surprisingly short space—to have established daughter Councils at Bordeaux, Lyons, Toulouse, Marseilles, and Arras. [Vol. I, pp 254–255]

According to a biography of M Jean-Baptiste Willermoz (1730–1824) I located on the web (Lard help us!) at http://www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/~bill/_mim0002.html, he founded the Lodge of "The Perfect Friendship" in 1753, which was chartered by the Grande Loge Nationale de France on 21 November 1756. Willermoz later founded the "Sovereign Chapter of Knights of the Black Eagle/Rose-Croix", in 1763, presumably during his tenure as Provincial Grand Master.

However, he was not necessarily a “Martinist”, at that time, given the data I have before me. For though Willermoz was initiated into the Rite des Élus Cohens by Martines de Pasqually himself, at Versailles, it occurred sometime after he left Lyons for Paris in May of 1767 [according to the above essay].

This Rite is supposed to have been founded by Martines in 1754 [Heckethorn, *The Secret Societies of All Ages and Countries*: Vol. I, §266], but Waite finds this claim doubtful [Vol. II, p 60]. He notes:

> It appears to have had a sovereign tribunal at Paris in the year 1767, at the head of which was that mysterious, magnetic personality, Don Martines de Pasqually. He himself is first heard of at Toulouse in 1760, furnished with a hieroglyphical charter and the title of Inspector-General. [*Ibid*, Vol. II, p 336]

Heckethorn states that the “Order of Martinists” was founded in this same year of 1754 [Vol. I, §266]. I can find no date at which Willermoz was initiated into the “Martinists”, and therefore have no reason to admit a date prior to 1760, two years after the foundation of the first Rose-Croix.

Is Partit seriously suggesting that Willermoz originated the Rose-Croix degree in Lyons, prior to 1758, and that it was subsequently adopted by the Council of the Emperors of the East and West? If so, it seems that he is privy to information not available to Waite at the time of his writing, and I would very much like to hear more of his sources.

Otherwise, we can hardly appeal to Willermoz as the ultimate authority on its symbolism, as his usage would be derivative of a pre-existing ritual, whatever his subsequent impact on modern (Supreme Grand Council of England) interpretations of the Grade. To my mind, any argument about the “correct” form of the rituals of the Rose-Croix must include some defensible statement(s) concerning its origin.

Waite, though qualifying his words, waxes most eloquent in condemning false pretenders to the Grade, reflecting closely Jac Partit’s interpretation, saying:

> It will be understood that in these words I am concerned only with the Grade as it is conferred under the obedience of the SUPREME COUNCIL of England and Wales, and of those other Supreme Councils that are united in using the one form of this Ritual which is alone of consequence, being concerned with the finding of Christ as the True Word in Masonry. It must be stated that there are follies and abominations of philosophical ROSE-CROIX grades, Deistic ROSE-CROIX Grades, and other devices which are part of an apostasy in symbolism. They are all indifferently false in doctrine, and fictitious in Masonry. The true Grade is concerned with the search, suffering and attainment of those who have

> come out of Craft Masonry demanding a better title than that which distinguishes Brethren who have been raised to a substituted Masterhood in the kind of light which only makes darkness visible, and have found no lasting profit in reunion with companions of their toil whose position is no better than their own. [Vol. II, p 372]

Forgive my prejudicial view, but whenever I see him puffed-up to that size, I generally start looking for what's lurking behind him. Taking just such a stance, he once scourged the evil occultists from Holy Precincts of the Golden Dawn, and this fact is never far from my thoughts as I read him.

More to our point, if Crowley has produced a fundamentally flawed interpretation of the Rose-Croix Grade, in the form of the OTO 5th degree, then his work is certainly not unique, at least according to Waite. A comparison to another of its peers, such as that worked in obedience to the Supreme Council of France, might prove illuminating.

JOHN DAY

Jac Partit responds:

I would first say that it is richly ironic that John Day quotes Waite in support of an OTO argument. The problem with the *New Masonic Encyclopædia* is that it is not reliable. Its limitations are extensively discussed in R A Gilbert's biography of Waite and I won't repeat them here. The principle source that I used to inform my remarks was A C F Jackson's history of the Ancient and Accepted Rite published in 1995 to mark the 150th anniversary of the Supreme Council for England and Wales. Let's move on to the points raised one by one:

1. *Chapter of Clermont.* I am afraid that current research suggests that the Chapter of Clermont was entirely mythical. It was created by Pierre de Lintot who attributed it to Clermont who was then the Grand Master of French freemasonry. He included seven degrees that proved to be developed in France in the 1760s and 1770s.

2. *Key dates:*

> 1761—First mention of the title "Sovereign Princes Rose-Croix" applied to holders of the degree of Knights of the Eagle.

1762—Morin receives the first constitution of the Ancient and Accepted rite. The council of the Emperors of the East inaugurated.

1763—Morin in the West Indies.

1765—Willermoz completes the Rose-Croix ritual in Lyon.

1781—Publication of the ritual of the Knight Kadosh degree.

Surviving manuscripts held in the library of the United Grand Lodge of England demonstrate that the Council of Emperors of the East and West had no part in issuing a patent to Morin and that their degrees were absorbed into the Ancient and Accepted at a later date.

3. *The Templar Tradition*. A big subject that has kept some dubious authors in royalties for years. Indeed it was, of course, a central feature of the Congress of Wilhelmsbad in 1782 which debated Baron Von Hund's contention that the Order of the Temple had survived and was the creative force behind freemasonry. This claim had been seriously undermined in 1782 when it had been formally denied by Charles Edward Stuart, Duke of Albany. The outcome of the Congress was that the case was not proven. Willermoz attended the Congress and was a member of Von Hund's Order of the Strict Observance. When the Congress concluded with a decision to drop the Templar Claim Willermoz renamed his "Templar Group" the "Knights Beneficent of the Holy City" leaving the Ancient and Accepted quite separate and unaffected.

4. *Martinism*. John Day is correct in the sense that "Martinism" as it now exists has been hugely influenced by Louis Claude de Saint-Martin and Papus. In the beginning there was no initiatic ceremony—Pasqually would have directly transmitted initiation and the ideas that underpin the Cohen workings. Willermoz both knew Pasqually and accommodated Saint-Martin at a time when he was directly involved in the preparation of the Rose-Croix ritual. My point is that Willermoz would have communicated his concern with esoteric Christianity into the 18th degree. That degree is the one that largely informs the modern ritual. In France the exoteric symbols of Christianity were removed in the 1880s.

5. *Crowley*. I would refer John Day to the *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* Vol. 108 where Crowley's masonic activities are discussed in some length by Martin Starr.

I can fully understand the negative view of the last paragraph of Waite which is quoted by Mr Day. However, what I object to is the simple lack of effort made in the use of the ritual of the 18th degree. It is left as a fundamentally Christian degree with some novelty effects. You would think that the founder of a new aeon would have had a better stab at originality. After all why does Crowley need freemasonry at all—shouldn't the OTO be something that strives for a new formulation of ritual? As it is the OTO 5th degree adequately prepares the candidates for the shit that lies at the culmination of the 11°.

It is also pertinent to address the endless folly of the Knight Templar myth. Crowley among many others failed to fully understand that the legend of the Templars was an outer form of an altogether different struggle. As you know each of the apostles founded an apostolic succession (or Church). Peter founded the see of Rome but John established the esoteric church from the teaching he received directly. Both the Petrine and Joannine churches worked from the Vatican and have influenced the Papacy. However, while the Pope has emerged from either succession there has been, and always will be, a separate Successor of John. The divergence between both factions was at its greatest during the Avingnon Papacy when France took control of the Petrine church. At that time de Molay was promoted as an opponent of Clement V. The Templars retrieved an object, or objects, during the 1st Crusade and returned them to Rome. They were neither held nor transmitted through the Templar Order. The various oriental influences on their practices and their immense wealth have been confused with these original artefacts.

By the way Joel, I looked at the book you mentioned on the Templar "Head" [*The Head of God* by Keith Laidler—Ed]. It suggested that the proportions of the body represented on the Turin shroud indicated that the Head was placed on a neckless corpse and that this head was that which was allegedly worshipped by the Templars. In the conclusion it was explained that the most "logical" explanation was that this head was the embalmed head of Christ. Oh Dear. Going to all the trouble of writing a book to come up with that. Do I need to describe the rest? It led me to that little diatribe against the Templar faction, as I realised that this was the OTO Achilles heel. Whatever one feels about the current generated by Crowley it does to me seem strange that he felt the necessity to align it with a small fringe masonic order (well yes he did need the money and enjoyed the deference). However, he left a problematic legacy in that his move could only be credible if the OTO represented a hidden occult order that had succeeded the Order of the Temple. Undermine that connection and by extension it undermines the whole Thelemic edifice. The reason to my mind is that if the OTO is induced to respond to the allegation that their Templar inheritance is a fraud there is no convincing reply other than the wilder fantasies of the Lincoln/Baigent variety (we are back to the cypher manuscript controversy). Their invective will become more shrill

as their arguments fail to stack up. One then wonders what the point of all of their cobbled together grades and spurious titles is—is it perhaps that this is all there now is in the Order? That the current of the new aeon is elsewhere and all they inherited was the dirty washing and teatowels.

No modern authentic traditional esoteric order has relied on Templar succession. It triumphed as a romantic idea of the 19th century.

JAC PARTIT

The argument difficult to argue

John Day mentioned to me privately another argument to do with the symbolism of the OTO rite, but felt that though this argument was persuasive it was not proper to allow it to enter the debate and amiably conceded Jac Partit's points. I may hint darkly at the other argument by reminding readers that some hold that the "true" origin of the term "Rosicrucian" is sexual and that the "rose" is a blind inserted into the symbolism to conceal the sexual nature of the "alchemical process", that actually it is the "ros" (Latin, "dew") of the Cross.

It should also be pointed out that technically the Order of Oriental Templars do not today claim Templar succession, even though they rather lackadaisically imply it. I once asked Bill Heidrick of the Caliphate OTO on the alt.magick newsgroup what exactly were the claims of the Caliphate OTO to have descended from anything. I did actually intend to imply a question more to do with the controversy of the origin of the *Caliphate* as opposed to the OTO *per se*, but nonetheless though he dodged that his answer is of interest:

> Mainly from the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, with absorption or influence from a whole slue of other organizations cited by Crowley in the *Blue Equinox*, including very distant or mythical influences such as the Illuminati. Those last are demonstrated precursors only in the sense of the influence on the general European culture. Knights Templar is in that category, at best.

It needs to be said that Aleister Crowley himself, for all of his plagiarism or "adaption", did envisage that the OTO's rites would be performed with style and was only too aware before his death that they were becoming empty imitations. Crowley wrote a letter to Jack Parsons on March 27, 1946, in which he expressed his disgust with the Agapé

Lodge for slackness in executing the rituals he had "cut down" (seeming to imply "from masonic originals"). In the course of it he shows the effect he intended his rituals to have, suggesting that the Minerval degree (0°)—a dialogue based on a prisoner being brought before Saladin at his desert encampment—did not have to take place in a lodge setting and that they should be more adventurous in interpreting these rites:

> … you have not succeeded in putting on even the Minerval degree in such a way that it will stand out as a landmark in the life of anyone who goes through it. This is particularly irritating to me because you have an actual desert conveniently handy [the Mojave—Ed]. You ought to warn the candidate when you accept him that he must expect to be summoned for initiation at any hour of the day or night. He should then be called probably after sunset and driven out as far as you can reasonably manage to the desert, which he should reach by the time that it is thoroughly dark. He should then be seized, blindfolded and bound by the Black Guard who are conducting him—rather roughly than otherwise—to the tent in front of which the Saladin is seated behind an altar with *The Book of the Law* and other necessaries of the ritual.
>
> This is only a rough idea of the sort of thing, but you have got to impress the man. If you don't the whole business becomes foolishness. Then when you get on to the First Degree, if he has been rightly initiated, he ought to be prepared for further strokes where he feels it most. The well must be properly constructed; it is no good having a grotesque makeshift. I hear that in some cases officers have actually *read* their parts in the ritual, which is absolutely disgraceful. You have no idea how much time and trouble it gives me to cut down those rituals so that it would be reasonably possible for men to learn them by heart under modern conditions. If you compare these rituals with those of Freemasonry you should all be ashamed of yourselves. Consider the long and dreary lectures that they all had to get absolutely by heart and I am sure that the discipline in Masonic Lodges is such that the whole of my life I have never known an officer even to falter.
>
> Now the Fifth Degree is a most complicated and expensive rite. I do not think you could get the furniture for less than $500; perhaps the way prices are nowadays $1,000 might be nearer. But the Minerval can be put on without any great expense, provided there is somebody with a car, and my advice is to get this polished up to the point of perfection.



Review articles

Beyond our Ken

Against the Light: A Nightside Narrative by Kenneth Grant
(London: Starfire Publishing, 1997)

reviewed by Alan Moore

"This is a terrible defect in your outlook on life; you cannot be content with the simplicity of reality and fact; you have to go off into a pipe-dream."
Aleister Crowley, writing to Kenneth Grant, February 15, 1945.

As fascinating and as ultimately mystifying as a giant squid in a cocktail dress, what shall we make of Kenneth Grant? I know few occultists without at least a passing interest in his work, and I know fewer still who would profess to have the first idea what he is on about. What he is *on*. To open any Grant text following his relatively lucid *Magical Revival* is to plunge into an information soup, an overwhelming and hallucinatory bouillon of arcane fact, mystic speculation and apparent outright fantasy, as appetising (and as structured) as a dish of Gumbo. The delicious esoteric fragments tumble past in an incessant boil of prose, each morsel having the authentic taste of magic, each entirely disconnected from the morsel which preceded it. Sometimes it seems as if inferior ingredients have been included, from an unreliable source: the occult data and the correspondences that simply fail to check out when investigated, knowledge that appears to have been channelled rather than researched. Doubtful transmissions from the Mauve Zone.

Spicing this delirious broth, characteristically we come across bewildering yet urgent outbursts in which Grant repeatedly protests that the eleventh degree ritual of the OTO involves no homosexual practices, or jaw-dropping accounts of magic workings that defy all credibility, with live baboons dragged screeching into nothingness by extra-human forces, this delivered casually, almost as after-dinner anecdote. The onslaught of compulsive weirdness in Grant's work is unrelenting, filled with jumpy fast-cuts that remind one less of text than television: *H P Lovecraft's House Party*. Each chapter an emetic gush of curdling chthonic biles and juices served up steaming, a hot shrapnel of ideas, intense and indiscriminate. A shotgun full of snails and amethysts discharged point blank into the reader's face.

The difficulty in assessing Kenneth Grant as writer is compounded by his stance as magus which, quite properly, insists upon the personal and the subjective, making it impossible to view his writings without reference to Grant himself, the atmosphere of his peculiar mind hung in a churning fogbank over every page. A mere fifteen, Grant blundered into the fluorescent vortex of Aleister Crowley via a copy of *Magick in Theory and Practice* discovered in a Charing Cross Road bookshop. Three years later, aged eighteen, Grant joined the army "with the expectation of being sent to India, where I had hopes of finding a guru". Given that Grant's enlistment took place at the height of World War II, this statement would seem to suggest a grasp upon conventional worldly reality that was at best precarious. Eighteen months after setting out on his unusual khaki path towards enlightenment, Grant suffered an unspecified "health breakdown" and was discharged from the forces. During convalescence, he wrote to the Jermyn Street address listed in Crowley's *Book of Thoth*, and subsequently entered into first a correspondence and then, later, full apprenticeship with the Great Beast.

Grant, at the time, was barely twenty, while the Master Therion was in his early seventies, a magus down to his last chants and just about to settle into premises at Netherwood in Hastings, Crowley's terminal address. The details of the correspondence and relationship are to be found in Grant's *Remembering Aleister Crowley*, an entrancing blend of fannish scrapbook and *The Screwtape Letters*, published by Skoob Books in 1991. The frequently exasperated tone of Crowley's letters to his younger acolyte suggests a Thelemic Laurel and Hardy routine: Stan fails to magickally identify a channelled drawing of the entity called LAM. In retaliation, Olly knocks Stan's bowler hat off and then treads on it. Stan scratches his head and weeps.

In spite of such one-sided spats between the hapless Grant and his impossibly demanding tutor, Crowley penned a memo during 1946 to the following effect: "Value of Grant: if I die or go to USA, there must be a trained man to take care of the English OTO." This memo is one of the building blocks supporting Grant's succession to the

leadership of what is now called the Typhonian OTO, a wilfully chthonic enterprise that seems devoted to exploring Magic's darker countenance; its subterranean underbelly. Clearly, these psychic cave-diving expeditions have done much to generate the slightly creepy, claustrophobic aura that perfumes the reputation of both Grant and his organisation. It's not so much that the Typhonian OTO has "something of the night" about it, more that it gargles with the stuff, splashes it underneath both arms and down its underpants, a schoolboy gone berserk on brimstone aftershave.

Hardly surprising, then, that this relentlessly infernal posture should elicit comment, much of it adverse. As an example, occult writer Gerald Suster has described Grant and his circle as "wallowing in Qlipothic slime", and while this might sound like a perfectly good Saturday night out to you or I, it seems to be intended as a criticism. Grant, it must be said, does not bend over backwards to contradict this impression. Each new published work contains a further mapping of his inner, magic landscape that exposes more of its bizarre nocturnal landmarks, its unutterable flora and fauna: mauve zones, ninth arches and tunnels of Set; leapers and Outer Gods and elementals in the form of monstrous aquatic owls. The ingress of alien information through the knowledge-gate of the eleventh Sephiroth. Mind parasites. Neural invaders. Great Cthulhu. An apparently deliberate blurring of the line between describing Separate Reality and writing Magic Fiction, if there ever really was a line to blur.

This brings us to *Against the Light*, ostensibly a novel rather than a book of writings about magic, issued in a limited hardback edition of a thousand by Starfire Publishing Ltd. From the word go the novel, if novel it be, adopts an unapologetically ambiguous position. Nowhere on its jacket or within do we find any notice that *Against the Light* is meant to be received as fiction. The only description of its content that we find is in the volume's cryptic subtitle: *A Nightside Narrative*.

The text itself, of course, only confounds the matter further. From the opening dedication to Grant's great-uncle, one Phineas Marsh Black, we are immersed within the question that has surely haunted every reader of Grant's earlier writings: just how much of this is supposed to be… you know… real? The prologue talks of "Uncle Phin" and Grant's great-cousin Gregor, seemingly also a relative of Crowley's and an actual person, his existence at least vouched for elsewhere in Grant's oeuvre of avowed non-fiction. From here we trip lightly through a brief discussion of Clan Grant and an unusual family heirloom in the form of a forbidden book known as *Grant's Grimoire*, this being a record of the quaint, longstanding family tradition of "traffic with entities not of this world". The author helpfully informs us that "there exists to this day in the library of a Florentine family an Italian version, *Il Grimoire Grantiano*."

Scarcely have we had time to absorb this stylish continental touch than we are

introduced to yet another member of Clan Grant, this time an ancestor named Margaret Wyard who, the author gleefully informs us, is alleged to have claimed carnal knowledge of the Devil in a bestial form at UFO hotspot Rendlesham Forest during the sixteenth century. Just as we're starting to appreciate how much fun Christmas family reunions at the Grant place must have been, we're whisked away into the body of a narrative where the first person author and a scryer-for-hire named Margaret Leesing attempt to solve the interlocking mysteries of Margaret Wyard and the grimoire, leading them into the world of shrieking cosmic horror where Grant at least seems to feel most at home, most thoroughly relaxed.

Nothing about the style of Grant's delivery throughout the book distinguishes *Against the Light* from the preceding non-fictional work. The author's voice has the same worryingly straight-faced tone to which the readers have become accustomed, and instead of any novelistic structure we see Grant employ his usual device of sweeping a vast pile of fascinating information up into one place, then chopping it out arbitrarily into a semblance of individual chapters. Characters familiar from Grant's previous work recur: Crowley himself, along with Austin Osman Spare, Yeld Paterson and Black Eagle, Spare's famous spirit guide. The anecdotes describing ritual events and states are not intrinsically more unbelievable than those to be found in Grant's earlier work, except that here they occupy more space. Presenting his account, the author does not seem less earnest or less anxious to convince than he seems in *Nightside of Eden* or *Outside the Circles of Time*.

Given the above, attempting to critique *Against the Light* by the same terms one would apply to, say, a current horror-fantasy novella would seem both redundant and unfair. Should we then treat the book as an expanded ritual journal, a straightforward piece of magical reportage, only differing from Grant's previous work in its ratio of anecdote to ideology? Again, this presents difficulties, not least being that alongside all the genuine occult celebrities woven into Grant's tale we also find clearly fictitious personages such as Helen Vaughn, half-human heroine of Arthur Machen's work *The Great God Pan*, or Richard Pickman, the doomed artist spirited away by ghouls in H P Lovecraft's *Pickman's Model*. Throw in Sin Sin Wa, an astral Chinaman who seems to be the model for Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu, and one begins to grasp the full dimension of the problem.

Complicating matters is the nature of the narrative itself, with certain passages apparently intended to take place somewhere at least within the vague proximity of ordinary reality, while other parts plunge us into scryed scenes from history or else full-fledged shamanic visions. Furthermore, Grant seldom bothers to make the transition between one state and another absolutely clear and, indeed, seems to see the different

planes of narrative as pretty interchangeable. We're dragged, with the narrator, from the glittering hallucinatory bowels of a Lovecraftian underworld, through West End London and into the scrying bowl, often within a page. Adding to the disorienting nature of the tale is the narrator's almost total lack of any recognisable emotional reaction to the Bosch-like apparitions he is constantly confronted by. The literary influence of Lovecraft, obviously a writer much admired by Grant, shows here in the flatness of human characterisation when compared to the vivid and chop-smacking depictions of the narrative's squamous, trans-human horrors.

This lack of emotional response, if we are dealing with an actual account of Grant's experiences rather than fantastic fiction, conveys an absence of affect that turns the landscape of the prose, merely hallucinatory before, into a genuinely psychopathic vista, both obsessive and unsettling. But *are* we dealing, here, with real experience? If so, real in what sense? Is this a standard horror yarn with an authoritative occult gloss? Is this the fleshed-out record of a ritual working, or a glimpse into the marvellous rubbish left by the collapse of an extraordinary mind? Just what in hell, exactly, are we looking at?

Obviously, the simplest course of action would be to conclude that Grant's work represents no more than funny-coloured bedlam froth, a warning to the rest of us about what happens when you start believing outré things and hang round with Aleister Crowley. This, however, leads us back to our original dilemma: if Grant's opus can be neatly summed up as merely incoherent ravings, why do most occultists that I know, myself included, have more or less everything that Grant has ever published resting on our shelves? Also, how shall we square a view of Grant as foaming lunatic with the same Kenneth Grant who has contributed so much of worth to the contemporary occult worldview? Without Grant to champion the then-all-but-forgotten works of his friend Austin Osman Spare, the artist would now be remembered as a minor fantasist who sometimes did the odd impressive nude (this was the view advanced in the dismissive, limp obituary notices that Spare's contemporary critics heaped upon him). Without Grant's insistence that the works of H P Lovecraft represented valid channels of magical information, much of the furniture and landscape of our modern magic systems, Chaos magic for example, would be utterly unrecognisable. A sasquatch at a vicarage tea-party, Grant is too big to dismiss, too weird to feel entirely comfortable about. What shall we make of Kenneth Grant?

The answer, if indeed there is an answer, might lie part-concealed within *Against the Light*'s seemingly cryptic subtitle, *A Nightside Narrative*. Is this a simple flourish, a mere gothic affectation, or could it be an attempt to provide a label that is both more accurate and more explanatory than plain unvarnished "fiction"?

Let us pause here to consider the essential nature of Grant's contributions to the

world of Magic. From his advocacy of the works of Spare and Lovecraft to this latest offering, it's difficult not to perceive a man deeply in love with what Sax Rohmer christened the Romance of Sorcery. This is not to label Grant a fantasist in the pejorative sense: there's a good case to be made for the position that fiction, romance and fantasy have *always* been the cornerstone of Magic theory. From the first cave-wall surrealism of Palaeolithic shamans, through the visionary poetry of Blake and the vastly important, almost-free-associational synthesis of occult ideas constructed by Eliphas Levi, on to Crowley and Blavatsky, to the Lovecraft/Moorcock tropes of the Chaos magicians, what we see acknowledged is the staggering supernatural power of creative imagination.

Might not the entire of Magic be described as traffic between That Which Is and That Which Is Not; between fact and fiction? If we are to speak of Magic as "The Art", should we not also speak of Art as Magic? Even Crowley tellingly and rather poignantly describes great artists as superior to great magicians. Crowley also points out the connection that exists between a grimoire and a grammar, between casting spells and spelling; goes so far as to admit, at one point, that the greater part of magical activity lies in simply writing about it. Clearly there is a reason why Hermes and Thoth, the Gods of Magic, should be simultaneously the Gods of Writing.

The magician conjures angels or else demons, out of nothingness into manifestation, while the novelist does likewise with her ideas and her characters. Again we have a commerce between the existent and the non-existent, something out of nothingness, the rabbit from an empty hat that is perhaps the very crux of magical endeavour.

The intensely beautiful and elegant schema described by the Qabala, which rests at the fulcrum of Western Occult Tradition, speaks of the ninth, lunar sphere of Yesod as the gate through which all energies from higher stations on the Tree of Life pour down into material form and manifest existence. Yesod, as the sphere of the unconscious mind, is thus the well from which both the magician and the artist draw. Though situated "higher" than the earthly and material sphere of Malkuth on the Qabalistic diagram, Yesod at the same time represents the underworld of our subconscious and oneiric faculties, the eerie and chthonic realm of Hecate upon which Grant and his Typhonian OTO lavish their magical attention. These are the bone-strewn caves that rest beneath the deepest cellars of Jung's mansion of the human soul, the dark pits where all dreams and magics spawn. All fictions and insanities born in the queer light of a buried moon: this is the Nightside.

We may read this as the metaphor upon which the subtitle of *Against the Light* depends. The Dayside can perhaps be seen as the consensual outer world of Apollonian thought, empiric reason and the waking mind; the sharp-edged sunlit world of Fact. The Nightside, judged by the same token, then becomes a personal and inner realm of

Dionysiac non-sense, fantasy and dream; the shifting moonlit realm of Fiction. In between these two states lies a twilight, intermediary domain: a mauve zone, if you will. This is William Hope Hodgson's borderland, a troubling grey area in our contract with Reality, the kingdom of the Half-Real, of the swine-things and the shoggoths and the leapers. A blurred spot between the actual and the imaginary. Sometimes things come through. Sometimes, things trade position with their own reflection. Real works of Magic are exposed as fictions. Works of fiction are revealed as Magic. Yelda Paterson winks knowingly at Helen Vaughn and Anna Sprengel. If a witch or sorcerer be of sufficient magnitude and power, the fact that he or she be also fictional should not prove any great impediment.

Viewed in this crepuscular light, the ambiguities that haunt Grant's book can be resolved. This is not a work of fiction, nor is it authentic Magic documentary. Instead, it is both of those things, shaped by an understanding that the territory of the fantastic is of singular importance to the magus. The subterranean landscape of the Unreal yields a lush, fertile environment, pregnant with possibility, that will sustain both occultist and artist. New life forms erupting from corrosive and impossible conditions, clustering around the boiling mouths of deep sub-oceanic vents or fissures.

It need not be said that this terrain is also highly dangerous: always the risk of being swallowed by one's own conjured illusions. In Pellucidar, the flora and the fauna can be snappish; unpredictable. Tunnels of Set collapse and leave the rescue party, if there is one, listening for voices from the rubble. Or they'll find you dangling from the Ninth Arch, twisting slowly in the astral breeze, strangled by shadows. Dreamshot. Yellow Brick Road-kill.

Then again, it might be argued that no true, authentic magic insight is achievable without considerable risk. Kenneth Grant's books, despite or possibly because of their forays into dementia, have more genuine occult power than works produced by more conventionally coherent authors, and are certainly a more engrossing read. The lack of any safety-rail about Grant's prose is one of its most captivating features. Purple passages that sometimes shift into the ultra-violet. Trains of speculation in spectacular head-on collision. Thousands dead.

Semantic theory breaks down all communication into two components, noise and signal. Thoth the language god and his pet ape, the gibbering Cynocephalus, the monkey with the typewriter. Order and chaos. Paradoxically, the noise is capable of holding much more information than the signal: a page of *Janet and John* is more or less entirely signal and contains a minimum of information, while a page of Joyce's *Ulysses* is almost wholly noise and therefore holds a massive quantity of coded data. So with Kenneth Grant, the constant flood of ideas that elude the reader's comprehension and yet are

suffused with a greater potential, with a greater potency of meaning than the notions of his more reliable, pedestrian contemporaries. Laudanum as compared with Alcopops.

Value of Grant: as paranormal pit-canary and as point-man, Kenneth Grant has been prepared to roll his sleeves up and plunge elbow deep in the "Qlipothic slime" of his imagination, benefiting those of us who'd rather watch from a safe distance. In amongst the vast amount of tentacled and slithering bug-eyed junk he trawls up in his nets there have been pearls of an impressive size and lustre. It is hard to name another single living individual who has done more to shape contemporary western thinking with regard to Magic. If we should dismiss him and his work, on what grounds should we do so? That he's dark? That he's as mad as tits on a piranha? That he's weird? As if the world of the occult was the last place one should expect to find darkness, insanity or weirdness. Rather, we should recognise Grant as a pioneer, if only by the arrows in his back; a fabulous arcane adventurer of an old school that's long since disappeared, if indeed it was ever "really" there; more a successor to John Silence, Simon Iff, Carnacki and the gang than a mere Crowley acolyte.

Against the Light is a rip-roaring arcane text, two-fisted occultism. Read as novel or as magic treatise, it will fail to satisfy, having neither the neat structure of fiction nor the compelling credibility of fact. Read as an incredible chimaeric hybrid of the two, and thus a striking comment on the strange interrelationship between them, it could conversely be seen as a bold, decadent masterpiece, a communiqué from reason's furthest reaches, and beyond. It's to be hoped that the response of the occult book-buying public is sufficient to encourage Starfire Publishing to release any subsequent "Nightside Narratives", granting us further access to Grant's logbook as he presses on with his safari into nightmare. Magic's Mr Kurtz seeking his Heart of Darkness. As a bulletin from that internal, fictive dark, *Against the Light* reminds us that the shadow holds its own form of illumination. Highly recommended for those with an interest in the point where the extremes of magic meet the furthest, most precarious edge of fantasy and fiction. This is Hardcore.

You *cannot* be Sirius!

Netherworld: Discovering the Oracle of the Dead by Robert Temple
(London: Century, 2002)

reviewed by Steve Marshall

Netherworld begins keenly enough with a marvellous description of crawling through tunnels in Baia, Italy, and a truly scary evocation of the giant mosquitoes to be found there, but falters as soon as the subject of the book has to be revealed. The basic thesis is that the Greek Underworld of Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* was not a product of the ancient imagination but was based on an *actual physical location*, and Robert Temple—author of *The Sirius Mystery*—is the only man alive to have been there (not counting the others).

Inspired as a youth by the late Robert Paget's *In the Footsteps of Orpheus* (1967), Temple has spent the past 20 years trying to get permission to gain access to a complex of tunnels in Baia depicted by Paget as an "Oracle of the Dead". Temple says Baia was meant to be a model of Hades complete with its own River Styx and Charon the ferryman where drugged seekers were led into a mystery play they believed to be real. In early 2001 the long-awaited permission came. Robert and wife Olivia booked in for a great adventure holiday in the Bay of Naples with mate Michael Baigent, a fellow popular ancient mysteries author, and his wife Jane.

Then, dusting off an old book from 1984, *Conversations with Eternity*, his first rehash of Paget's work, there was the chance for a new book. Despite constantly advertising his previous books in the text of *Netherworld*, nowhere does Temple or the publisher state that this new book is a revised edition of the previous book, the title of which goes curiously unmentioned. In the description of the earlier book on Temple's website the fact that it is about Baia is conspicuous by its absence.

Okay, so now Temple has seen the place for himself. What's he found? Basically, tunnels, mud, and mosquitoes, and a lone pipestrelle bat. To add substance to what is otherwise a book of archæological psychometry without the slightest scrap of evidence in 500 pages that these tunnels were ever put to the stated use as an oracular model of the Underworld, he is reduced to the device of "seeming to see in my mind's eye". It's

a cheap trick when faced by blank walls without a trace of an ancient painting or pot sherd to back up the theory.

For instance, standing in a dim dingy subterranean alcove less interesting than the average garden shed, he "seems to see" two female faces, one prophesying. She's about 30 and has one blue eye and one green. Nearby there's an older woman, apparently the retired Sybil. And then he has the gall to round off this farcical stage-management of the reader's gullibility with the statement: "Of course, all this may be pure fantasy, and quite likely it is." But naturally the desired interpretation of a bunch of dirty old tunnels begins to gel in the reader's mind. And who is he writing for, that he finds it necessary to point out the depth to which ancient divinatory practices have penetrated modern language by explaining that the word "portentous" comes from "portent" and "fateful" from "fate".

Temple likes to present himself as a respected scholar, but scratch the surface and it is just a veneer, an appearance not hard to achieve if you have a good library and know how to create an impression of being well-read. Temple uses his learning not to profoundly advance the sum total of human knowledge but rather to fulfil a publishing contract. *Netherworld* just adds to the ragbag of historical confusions in the minds of readers who thirst for "popular" presentations of ancient wonders but have precious little critical apparatus in place to realise they are being fed soft food for archæological innocents, complete pap in other words. "Graham Poppycock" as it's known in archæologist's slang.

The second part of *Netherworld*, on Chinese divination and in particular the *I Ching*, is revised merely by a few new insertions from its 1984 version. He makes little attempt to connect the material on Baia with the Chinese material.

Tedious potboiler at best, grievous misrepresentation of history and myth at worst.

Heaven's Mandate

The Mandate of Heaven: Hidden History in the Book of Changes by S J Marshall
(London: Curzon Press; New York: Columbia University Press, 2001)

reviewed by Prof Stephen L Field

(Professor and Chair of Modern Languages & Literatures, Trinity University, San Antonio, TX USA)

The *Yijing*, or *Book of Changes*, is to the Chinese people as the Bible is to Western peoples. It is a sacred text whose words come not from God but from the sagely founders of the dynasty—culture heroes elevated almost to the status of gods by Confucius and his school. According to tradition, the earliest layers of the text were written by Chang, crowned posthumously as Wen, first king of the Zhou dynasty, in the 11th century BC. This attribution was not seriously questioned until the introduction of the critical apparatus of scientific methodology into China in the 20th century. Questions of origin were first raised by such scholars as Gu Jiegang and Li Jingchi in the 1930s, and since then the academic world has considered the sagely authorship of the *Yijing* to be the stuff of myth and legend. In the book under review, S J Marshall attempts to overturn this "complete disavowal of tradition" (p 7) by uncovering historical references to the founding fathers that have remained hidden in the cryptic text for thousands of years.

The book's ultimate argument hinges on the author's interpretation of the text of hexagram 55 ䷶ , "Feng" (豐). Two lines in the hexagram depict the Big Dipper constellation appearing in the middle of the day, which is only possible during a total eclipse of the sun, according to some. Marshall's brilliant insight is to identify the word *feng* in the same lines not as the common word for "abundance", which is the standard interpretation, but as the name of the capital city of Zhou, a feudal state at the western periphery of the ancient kingdom of Shang. Chang, Chief of the West, had begun to consolidate his power and move his sphere of influence toward the east at this time, but died unexpectedly soon after founding his new capital at Feng. Marshall deduces that Chang's son, Fa, saw the eclipse as a sign or "mandate" from Heaven that he was chosen to lead the rebellion against the evil Shou, last king of Shang. A check by Marshall of modern research verifies the occurrence of a total eclipse in northern China around noon on June 20, 1070 BC, a year that was also calculated by 4th century BC calendrical

scholars to have been the time of the conquest. Section I of the book, "The Mandate of Heaven", frames this basic argument and buttresses it with clever readings from other hexagram texts.

Section II, "Further Mysteries of the *Changes*", continues the same line of reasoning by seeking in other hexagrams historical references to events of the conquest. For example, hexagram 36 ䷣ , "Ming Yi" (明夷), has always baffled scholars. *Ming*, an ideograph composed of the pictographs for the sun and the moon, usually means "bright" or "light". *Yi* is the pictograph of an arrow with a cord tied around the shaft and means "to wound, injure". Since many of the lines in the hexagram clearly picture a bird being hunted, modern scholars have speculated that *mingyi* is the forgotten name of a bird, specifically the "calling pheasant". Marshall does not completely refute this interpretation, but he believes the literal meaning of wounding or "darkening" the light refers also to the phenomenon of the eclipse. To bolster his reading he makes another brilliant deduction, this time in reference to an ancient Chinese myth. The earliest variant of a popular myth asks literally "why did the Great Archer shoot the sun" and, after having done so, "why did the crow lose its feathers" (my translation). The standard answer, verified in later variants of the myth, is because there were ten suns in the sky whose intensity was scorching the earth. Feathers scattered because the ten suns were in reality ten sun-ravens who roosted in the east before one normally took flight every morning of the ten-day week. Marshall believes the later versions of the myth were accretions meant to explain an occurrence whose purpose had been totally forgotten, namely, that the mythical archer shot at the black bird who had eaten the sun, thus killing it and releasing the sun from the eclipse.

Section III of the book is a collection of five appendices that clarifies such things as "genealogical matters" (the family tree of King Wen), the "sexagenary cycle" (the sixty-term numbering system of the ancient Chinese), and the "sinological maze of Wilhelm-Baynes" (the puzzling format of the most popular English translation of the *Yijing*, that by Richard Wilhelm and Cary Baynes). Following this last section are over fifty pages of notes, an extensive bibliography of Western language works on the *Yijing* and related subjects, and a comprehensive index.

S J Marshall's intriguing work will be read with great interest by *Yijing* aficionados, and it will also attract the attention of contemporary scholars. The former will be immensely grateful for the clarity that Marshall brings to such an enigmatic text. The latter will initially scoff at the absence of Chinese language sources and point out a contradiction here or an anachronism there before grudgingly admitting that the thesis is basically sound. Everyone who reads *The Mandate of Heaven* will return to the *Book of Changes* with a renewed historical perspective.



"Why did Yi the Archer shoot at the sun? Why did crow feathers scatter?"

Tian Wen *l.* 56 ["Ask Heaven"]

Jack Parsons & Babalon

Sex and Rockets: The Occult World of Jack Parsons by John Carter
(California: Feral House, 1999)

reviewed by Joel Biroco

"I proceeded with the rituals, noting a mounting tension, and the sense of a presence inexpressibly poignant and desirable."
Jack Parsons, *The Book of Babalon*, March 2, 1946

Philip Larkin once said that when reading a biography he starts halfway through because by that time a person has got interesting. Jack Parsons of course did not live much past the halfway mark, being blown up at the age of 37 in his Pasadena coachhouse on June 17, 1952. It is usually said that he dropped a vial of the detonator fulminate of mercury, but cordite may have been involved, and details are sketchy not to say suspicious. He was apparently moving explosives for transportation on a "vacation" to Mexico with his wife, his "elemental mate" Marjorie Cameron, who was around the corner buying supplies for a picnic when the explosion happened. Possibly it was murder by a Captain Kynette, a car bomber Parsons testified against in 1938 who had recently been paroled, the theory is discussed in the book, towards the end, by which time Parsons has grown into a very interesting man indeed. Certainly Marjorie Cameron, who died in 1995 of cancer aged 73, an excellent artist, wrote in the Caliphate OTO journal *The Magical Link* that she believed it was murder and implied it was Kynette. Cameron played the Scarlet Woman and Kali in Kenneth Anger's 38 minute film *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954, recut in 1966 in a version intended to be watched on magic mushrooms).

Well-known to occultists for his 1946 Babalon Working, at which time he had studied magick for seven years and had supervised at the Agapé Lodge of the OTO in California for four, Parsons' life as a rocket scientist is not so well studied. Much of the first half of the book is taken up with it, and, though important in getting a true picture of Jack—John to friends at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory—Parsons, I must admit I did find it bogged down in rocket fuel burn-times and it will not be the main focus of attention here. Carter's style of writing is somewhat lacklustre, and, more annoying, he rarely

cites his sources or the context in which something was said or to who, which is a disappointing omission given that Carter has obviously done plenty of research.

Sex and Rockets is the first book-length biography of Parsons. Previously the only serious work of biographical research had been Michael Staley's essay "The Babalon Working/Belovèd of Babalon", which I remember eagerly reading in *Starfire* 3 back in 1989 in the aftermath of the KAOS-BABALON working. At this time in London, Parsons was spoken about by occultists with deep respect and love, here was a guy who "was out there man". When I read the description of how the explosion tore off his right forearm, broke his other arm and both legs, and left a "gaping hole" in his jaw and shredded his shoes, leaving him conscious for a further 37 minutes before he died, I was quite shocked, never having read that before. There's the standard witticism about the crater on the dark side of the moon that was named after him, and how they must have got the idea from the crater he left in his coachhouse floor, but Carter's graphic description made it fresh and serious, especially Parsons' last words as reported by Jet Propulsion Laboratory archivist John Bluth: "I wasn't done." (Curious words given that he proclaimed himself "The Antichrist" in 1949 and one of the seven recorded versions of Christ's last words on the cross was: "It is finished." [*John* 19:30]. These were the last words used in Scorsese's movie. Marjorie Cameron apparently said Jack's last words were: "Who will take care of me now?") On hearing of his death, Parsons' mother Ruth committed suicide, adding fuel to the ugly rumour concerning his "exteriorization" of the Oedipal complex and the peculiar home movies, involving also the family dog, that may or may not exist, which Shedona Chevalier of *babalon.net* has taken publisher Adam Parfrey to task for including a paragraph about.

These days you can find a copy of Parsons' *Book of Babalon* in seconds off the Internet, but part of its attraction for me 15 years ago was that you really had to track it down, it was seriously sought-after material, a treasure map of sorts that you might find a dog-eared mimeographed copy of in a friend's collection that had been much read and passed around, and sometimes pencil-annotated by several hands, which probably made it seem a lot better than it may appear now to the short-attention-span generation who skim it rather than study it. When Michael Staley published it in *Starfire* along with his essay many people were grateful for that.

Staley's essay, however, contains a stupendous error that has led most who have read his influential work into a complete misapprehension of Parsons' Babalon Working. *Sex and Rockets* mentions and corrects the error, repeated by others since 1989, although Carter does not attribute its source, which may not ultimately have originated with Staley. Even so, on reviewing the material again for the first time in years—not only Carter's book—I found it hard to credit how Staley could have got it so wrong. Parsons,

as he states in *The Book of Babalon*, began his Babalon Working on January 4, 1946, which was designed to obtain the assistance of an elemental mate. Aiding him in this operation at first as "Scribe" was L Ron Hubbard, who later absconded with Parsons' fortune. After a daily sequence of Enochian operations and other invocations, on January 18, at sunset in the Mojave desert, after four days of tension the feeling suddenly snapped and Parsons turned to Hubbard and said: "It is done." He was absolutely certain that the current phase of the operation had been accomplished. Returning home he found Marjorie Cameron, a fiery redhead who was 23 at the time, waiting for him. They had met before, and she had turned up to visit him at just this moment knowing nothing of his Babalon Working.

Parsons recognised Cameron as fulfilling the intent of his magical operation and he wrote to Aleister Crowley informing him that he had his elemental. Parsons records in *The Book of Babalon*: "During the period of January 19 to February 27 I invoked the goddess BABALON with the aid of my magical partner." This is the sentence that Michael Staley inexplicably misinterpreted, for some reason he believed that Parsons' "magical partner", despite Marjorie Cameron turning up, was still his "Scribe" L Ron Hubbard and he emphasised this in no uncertain terms. Of course, it was actually Cameron, who, according to Carter, said that the first two weeks of this period were spent in bed with Jack, although Carter does not cite where this information may be found, presumably a letter from Cameron to Jane Wolfe or an interview that he mentions in the back of the book but does not specify clearly. Cameron apparently related that the two of them talked incessantly during this period: "He educated me… that's what he was supposed to do." He made her aware that she "had a mission in the world". Even with Parsons' sparse wording in *The Book of Babalon*, it's hard to see how Staley could have so misread the situation to have written: "It is notable that, even with the advent of Marjorie Cameron, he continued to regard Hubbard as being his magical partner." I no longer have *Starfire* 3 to check, but the version of Staley's essay on the web inserts Hubbard's name in parentheses in Parsons' sentence after "magical partner". Possibly this is Staley's insertion, giving the impression it appears in the original, or it reflects a mistaken interpolation in the copy of *The Book of Babalon* that Staley was working from that he simply passed on without thinking it through. It would be interesting to know whether he still believes in this version of events, given that his essay has not been revised or annotated for the web (http://www.mysunrise.ch/users/prkoenig/staley/staley11.htm).

Staley's error is doubly hard to comprehend since Parsons states quite clearly in *The Book of Babalon*, in the section headed "Birth", dated March 2, 1946, that the Scribe "knew nothing of my invocations of BABALON, which I had kept entirely secret". Although Hubbard had a good idea of his activities, this sentence ought surely to have

alerted Staley to the fact that Parsons' magical partner from Jan 19 to Feb 27 was obviously Cameron. The only way Staley could have read this without having the truth dawn on him would have been to assume Parsons was referring solely to his reception of *Liber 49* on February 28 rather than to the entire sequence of events since Marjorie Cameron turned up on January 18. In fact, one wonders what exactly Staley thought Cameron's role in the Babalon Working actually was (interesting to reflect whether this is a general Typhonian OTO misunderstanding as well). Final confirmation that the magical partner was Cameron appears in a letter Parsons wrote to Crowley on March 6, 1946, in which he says: "I have had the most devastating experience of my life between Feb 2 and Mar 4. I believe it was the result of the 9th working with the girl who answered my elemental summons." (A reference to 9° sex magick.) The two weeks between Jan 19 and Feb 2 corresponds with the time Cameron said they spent mostly in bed and chatted incessantly, foreplay for the 9th you might say.

Parsons' *Liber 49*, 77 verses forming part of *The Book of Babalon* (four verses, 5–8, missing) presented in the section "Communications", was received by Parsons alone in the Mojave desert on February 28, the day after Cameron had returned to New York for a couple of weeks, during which she ditched her boyfriend Napoleon. It is in verse 23 of *Liber 49* that Babalon instructs him to seek her in the Seventh Aire, which was mentioned earlier in *KAOS* in that Parsons blundered here in his subsequent invocation and sought her instead by using the 7th Call rather than the 25th Call (ie, the 19th Call, or Call of the 30 Aires, with DEO substituted for LIL, to open the 7th Aire). It was shortly after receiving *Liber 49*, on March 2, that Hubbard as Scribe delivered his famous chilling prophecy to Parsons: "thou shalt become living flame before She incarnates."

Given Carter's correction of the mistake concerning the identity of Parsons' magical partner until February 27, it is ironic that on p 139 he says the role of the priestess, changed to "Babalon" by Parsons, in the enactment of a section of the Gnostic Mass on March 2 was recited by Cameron. Unless he has other information he has not imparted it seems to me she was still in New York at that time (a clumsy error since on p 132 Carter says Cameron went to New York on Feb 27 and stayed 2 weeks, which is it to be?). *The Book of Babalon* itself gives the impression that the Scribe Hubbard must have taken the role, or Parsons both roles. The priestess role here is almost identical to *Liber AL* I, v 61. Carter on p 142 speculates that Parsons and Cameron took turns reciting lines from Crowley's play *Tannhäuser* in the sixth invocation, again forgetting that he said she was in New York. If he can't get basic things like this correct, it does unfortunately call into question the book's reliability. For the record concerning Cameron's whereabouts at this time, Parsons wrote to Crowley on February 22, 1946: "One thing I seem to have my elemental. She turned up one night after the conclusion of the operation and has

been with me since, though she goes back to New York next week. She has red hair and slant green eyes as specified." (Russell Miller's account of the phase of the working after Feb 28 in *Bare-Faced Messiah*, his biography of Hubbard, is a product of his own imagination. The version in *L Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman?*, by Bent Corydon and L Ron Hubbard Jr, is also misleading.)

Carter's book, particularly in its dealings with the Babalon Working and the circumstances of Parsons' death, and also the peripheral influence of Jack Williamson's werewolf novel *Darker Than You Think* on the way Parsons envisaged Babalon, is well worth reading despite its sparsity of source citation and slapdash errors (another one: on p 116 he equates Babalon to Chokmah rather than Binah). On a small but interesting point, Carter mentions one odd coincidence in the Babalon Working I hadn't noticed before. In *The Book of Babalon*, on January 10 1946, Parsons writes that after his Enochian invocations he was awakened at 12 pm by nine loud knocks and a table lamp in the opposite corner of the room was thrown violently to the floor, there was no window by it nor any wind. Carter points out that given that L Ron Hubbard was Parsons' Scribe at this time it is curious that there is an Enochian word "Hubard", which means "living lamps". Actually this is a slight error that appears to be attributable to Israel Regardie's Enochian Dictionary (as published in *Enochian Sex Magick* by Duquette and Hyatt), the actual word for "living lamps" used in the 17th Key is "hubaro". Nonetheless, "hubar" is the stem for "lamp" or "lantern" in Enochian, and it is conceivable that the Enochian spirits, by knocking nine times and throwing a lamp to the floor, were by this omen attempting to warn Parsons about Hubbard. Parsons admits himself inexperienced in such phenomena; he saw it simply as the result of imperfect magical technique (I suppose he means a kind of turbulence) and didn't consider investing the event with significance or interpreting its meaning. While on the one hand it is fully explainable away (he heard the knocks in a dream, the lamp was already unstable, he awoke with a start, the vibration tipped the lamp), for a Master of the Temple it is an obligation to look deeply into the significance of even the most inconsequential of events, so how much more so an apparently supernatural occurrence during the timespan of an occult working. And while Parsons had not at that time taken the Oath of the Abyss, it is surprising he was not more familiar with omen phenomena, because in any case most true omens take a far more mundane form and it is the state of consciousness of the one experiencing the omen that recognises its significance *as* an omen.

Although Crowley's final assessment of Parsons as a "weak-minded fool", despite earlier regarding him as a man of great potential, may in some respects be accurate (although it is more that he was over-trusting and enthusiastic), I found on revisiting my interest in him that he still held a great deal of allure. He went over the edge with

his bizarre Antichrist manifesto, and some parts of *Liber 49* betray perhaps an imperfect reception—"Am I thy village queen and thou a sophomore, that thou shouldst have thy nose in my buttocks?"—but as an occultist Parsons was plugged in to the live current like few ever are. Carter pronounces his scientific achievements as underrated, and this is certainly so, but he also believes that as an occultist he was a failure. I don't personally believe so, because "failure" too can be a noble inspiration and ultimately depends on how you look at it. Who knows how many occultists have felt strangely inspired by Parsons' and Cameron's "failure". In a final letter to OTO head Karl Germer, Parsons wrote tongue-in-cheek of the great successes of his magical workings in terms of acute psychosis, manic hysteria, and depressing melancholic stupors, and that "satisfactory progress has been maintained in social ostracism, economic collapse and mental disassociation", and that these statements should be taken as "comfort and inspiration to other aspirants on the Path". He signs off by saying "you can tell all the little practicuses I wouldn't have missed it for anything". (Practicus is 3° in the A∴A∴)

More confusing is what Parsons expected to achieve beyond attracting his "elemental mate". It is easy to think that Marjorie Cameron was the Babalon he sought, and she herself in later years believed so (either that or she had given birth to "Her" on the astral, whether Babalon or Daughter of Babalon, it all gets a bit vague), yet Parsons himself appeared to have been awaiting some form of incarnation who, possibly, would come to him with a sign or sigil that he would recognise—Crowley supposed from the reports he had received from others in the OTO that Parsons was producing a Moonchild and felt it was "idiocy". Parsons was instructed to receive the sign by gazing for an hour upon a black box he had earlier been told to make, and he would see "a shape, a sign, a sacred design" appear imprinted on it. He was to construct this sigil in wood. I have never read anywhere anything further about this sigil or whether it survives. By the sign he would recognise that "BABALON is born!" How this was supposed to pan out is unclear. Did Parsons expect someone to be born as a result of his Working who when they reached adulthood would come and visit him flashing a sigil? Possibly, in *The Book of Babalon* he is told on March 2, 1946, via the Scribe: "Speak not of this ritual or of Her coming to any person. If asked, answer in a manner that avoids suspicion. Nor speculate at any time as to Her future mortal identity." Or did he expect something much sooner? Carter says on p 151 that Marjorie Cameron found she was pregnant by Parsons but had an abortion with his consent (again, without backing it up with a source), and another abortion later on, which makes one wonder what kind of incarnation he was seeking and also at what point he confided in her the full extent of his magical objective, because at first he kept from her that he considered her to be an elemental he had conjured up to help him fulfil this seemingly hazy objective.

In the aftermath of the 1946 Babalon Working and Hubbard's betrayal, disillusionment set in and for two years Parsons gave up magick, throwing himself into his scientific work, until his security clearance was temporarily withdrawn. Carter says he lost his clearance May 17, 1948 (p 159), but according to the 141 page FBI file that was actually the date the investigation began into his membership of a religious cult and friendship with an alleged Communist Party member (the name is censored from the file), his security clearance wasn't actually lost until September 29, 1948, the decision being reversed on March 7, 1949. Parsons claimed in a letter to Germer dated June 19, 1949, that one of the reasons for his suspension—which is confirmed therein as occurring in September 1948—was because of his circulation of Crowley's *Liber Oz*, but this isn't actually mentioned in the FBI file. Some time after the loss of his clearance, Cameron left him and the separation, which was temporary, involved the estrangement of most of his friends, this too he notes in the aforementioned letter to Germer. The FBI file describes Jack's home as "a gathering place of perverts" and notes that this was "fairly common knowledge among scientists in the Pasadena area". And it seems the OTO and "Church of Thelma [*sic*]" received its orders from "Sir Allister [*sic*] Crowley" in London, England. *The Book of the Law*, according to the FBI, "tears down everything democracy stands for".

After his loss of fortune, reputation, and livelihood, Babalon called on Parsons again in a dream and he learnt it was time to embark upon the "Black Pilgrimage" spoken of in *Liber 49*. He swore the Oath of the Abyss, "having only the choice between madness, suicide, and that oath", a good indication that he had arrived at the edge of the Abyss if nothing else. As a result, he realised he was the Antichrist.

In his 1949 *Manifesto of the Antichrist* Parsons writes that in seven years Babalon will manifest in the world (he also says that in nine years a nation shall accept the Law of the Beast 666 in his name). Again, one presumes that he expected either the birth of a child or an actual woman who *was* Babalon completely and utterly—notwithstanding that a woman *is* when the spirit of Babalon comes upon her—and that he expected Her as some Christian Fundamentalists expect the Apocalypse and cannot reconcile that a far more subtle but nonetheless powerful change that fulfils this description may have already been and gone, for those with greater awareness. (There's even a word for it, a "preterist", one who holds the prophecies of the Apocalypse already fulfilled.) In this, maybe it's to be expected that Parsons sought an incarnate Babalon, an avatar, if Crowley was The Beast 666 and he himself The Antichrist (Nietzsche had already fulfilled this role with a more eloquent denunciation of Christianity than Parsons' own 2 page tirade against such timeless iniquities as "lying priests, conniving judges, blackmailing police" and mention of his scary invocation of Satan at the age of 13). Yet despite the insanity

of his *Manifesto of the Antichrist*, Parsons mercifully appears quite lucid and together in his letters to Cameron between October 1949 and February 1950—during their temporary estrangement and near divorce—in which he addresses her as Candida, her magical name. Some of these letters are profoundly moving and beautiful expressions of love, and it's surprising Carter made no use of them at all to cast light on their relationship, instead giving weight on p 171 to an unnamed FBI informant's observation: "Subject seems very much in love with his wife but she is not at all affectionate and does not appear to return his affection. [2 lines censored by FBI] She is the dominating personality of the two and controls the activities and thinking of subject to a very considerable degree." (Carter's use of the letters to Cameron is restricted to two unattributed quotations on pages 60 and 108, and one cited on p 194, solely to illustrate matters other than their relationship. On p 169 he mistakenly attributes a quotation from Parsons' letter to Cameron of Jan 25, 1950, as coming from a letter from Parsons to Germer of January 1951.)

In a very interesting letter to Karl Germer of June 19, 1949, something emerges that is not mentioned by Carter, Jack's use of prostitutes for sex magick during his separation from Marjorie Cameron:

> For the time being my magical partners consist of those that can be purchased or otherwise easily picked up and disposed of. I have no further time for serious involvement with anyone who is not in accord with my Will. I charge you as a brother to regard this entire communication as strictly confidential, and preferably to destroy this letter. I do not want anyone besides yourself to know the details of my present condition or recent history—my time is not yet. I have written you because I sensed your kindly interest as a brother—because you first initiated me into the most holy and glorious sanctuary of True Magick—so that you might know the reasons for my present state and plans. My best wishes for your success, and (what is the same thing) for the accomplishment of the holy Law of Thelema, to which we are both dedicated. Love is the law, love under will.
>
> Fraternally, 210.

"210" is the gematrical summation of "Io Pan", relating to Parsons' magical name and motto. This letter might in addition be seen to cast doubt on Carter's bald statement that Parsons "hated" Germer (p 174), for which no evidence is offered. It is also in this same letter that Parsons said he had been working as a filling station attendant, an assertion unsourced in *Sex and Rockets* that Shedona Chevalier desired to know the origin of in her correspondence with Adam Parfrey.

It is still puzzling why Cameron did not appear to fit the bill as the expected Babalon. Parsons writes to Cameron on October 5, 1949: "I know that Babalon is incarnate upon

earth at this moment, although I do not know where or as whom. I believe that She will manifest in Her proper time, and that thereafter the rest of the prophecy will naturally follow." He was still educating her, and the poignancy of it all emerges when one knows that Cameron would later, years after his death, come to believe herself to be the avatar Jack awaited. Had he just set his heart on a particular scenario unfolding and he could not countenance, or rather recognise, the fulfilment of his desire in another and much closer form? Or did he secretly know Cameron was his avatar, but had to wait for her to find out for herself? Carter on p 135 claims Cameron said Jack had been warned in the desert not to tell her she was Babalon and also that she saw a silver cigar-shaped UFO and she felt this was the sign and told Jack about it. No source is given. This assertion is hard to fit together, Jack is not able to tell her she is Babalon while at the same time she supposedly sees a UFO and presents the sighting to him as the sign expecting to be confirmed as his avatar, which becomes even more confusing when Carter says that it wasn't until nine years after his death that she claimed to be Babalon (p 153). (Jack Parsons is also said to have been up in a plane with Kenneth Arnold, the pilot who coined the term "flying saucer" to describe the silver disks he saw in 1947.)

Despite reading *The Book of Babalon* many times and seeking the answer again in *Sex and Rockets*, I don't feel I am really any closer to understanding exactly what Jack Parsons' magical objective was, beyond some vague wish to fulfil an equally vague prophecy in Crowley's *Book of the Law*, a prospect which Crowley himself appears dismissive of, if that is indeed what he suspected was happening because even he seemed confused by it. *Liber AL vel Legis* contains a pseudo-Apocalyptic prophesy suggesting that a chosen priest—and Crowley was "not so chosen"—would come later and reveal great mysteries and his woman would be called the Scarlet Woman, this theme is broadly traceable through Chapter I, verses 15, 17, 54–57, Chapter II, verse 76, and Chapter III, verses 34, 45–47. It is conceivable that Parsons believed he was the chosen one, particularly given that like most of the chosen ones to date he proclaimed *Liber 49* to be the fourth chapter of *The Book of the Law*, or, rather, Babalon did through him in verse 2. Not every Thelemite regards this as heresy, Kenneth Grant says on p 17 of *Beyond the Mauve Zone* that "it is highly probable that the *Book of Babalon* manifested as the final chapter of *AL*." Jane Wolfe, who had been with Crowley at the Abbey of Thelema in Cefalu, certainly saw in Parsons a fulfilment of *Liber AL* when she wrote her first impression of him in her magical journal in December 1940 after he joined the Agapé Lodge: "I take Jack Parsons to be the child who 'shall behold them all' (the mysteries hidden therein. *AL* I, 54–55)."

Jack's clearest statement concerning his magical objective I feel is contained in the introduction to *The Book of Babalon*. After explaining that we are in an impasse of the

Age of Horus, and that domination by this force leads to war and catastrophe, which he puts down to our lack of understanding of our own natures and "the hidden lusts, fears, and hatreds resulting from the warping of the love urge", he goes on to encapsulate a clear aim that was perhaps lost in the later psychosis of believing himself to be the Antichrist:

> This impasse is broken by the incarnation of another sort of force, called BABALON. The nature of this force relates to love, understanding, and Dionysian freedom, and is the necessary counterbalance or correspondence to the manifestation of Horus.
>
> It is indicated that this force is actually incarnate in some living woman, as the result of the described magical operation. A more basic matter, however, is the indication that this force is incarnate in all men and women, and needs only to be invoked to free the spirit from the debris of the old aeon, and to direct the blind force of Horus into constructive channels of understanding and love. The methods of this invocation are described in the text.

So, while he certainly did expect a *living woman*, singular, to fulfil his plan, he went much further than even most today by recognising also that this force—Babalon—is incarnate in *all men* as well as all women. We cannot escape, however, the primary conclusion that he did expect a living avatar of Babalon to result as a consequence of his magical operation. Why this should be important is never addressed. To my mind it typifies the very old aeon thinking that he wished to transcend, to load all responsibility for transforming the world upon the shoulders of a lone female, in much the same way as thinking of Crowley as "The Beast 666" is the old aeon thinking that the 156 current is leaving in its wake. We've done all that stuff before, the Saviour trip, it's *boring*. Just as Jesus Christ had the delusion that he was the Messiah—as was pointed out to him so well by Satan in Scorsese's 1988 film *The Last Temptation of Christ* and in Nikos Kazantzakis's 1955 novel (which is used as a fresh parable in some seminaries)—Jack Parsons seems to have sank back into the old aeon he had initially seen through. I'm not saying he wasn't the Antichrist, by the way, or Crowley not the Beast, or even Christ not the Messiah, simply that this is all such identifications amount to. I'm with Satan on that one.

It is surprising that after all this time the hushed whispers and half light of old aeon thinking still remain, after all "The Law" was both "Written and Concealed" and anything not obvious is timorously suspected to be a deep occult secret (as opposed to mere rubbish) and people even today don't dare to speak of it, lest their lack of initiation be laid bare for all to see. This is the folly of the occult and occultists. People change, had Parsons lived what might he have made of his Babalon Working in a decade, two

decades. After his death Marjorie Cameron came to regard herself in some sense as the avatar Jack had wished to produce and got into her own trip. I noticed in a letter Parsons wrote to her on February 6, 1950, he mentions the book by Joseph Campbell *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, and he says he'll get her a copy of Crowley's *Book of Lies.* He's pointing her in directions, exciting her in things that he's excited by. Shortly after reading this letter I came across a letter from Joseph Campbell to Cameron, dated November 14, 1965. Fifteen years after Jack turned her attention to Campbell's work Cameron sent a set of slides of her paintings to him, and he was delighted by her work. And I got a sense of the cyclic working out of different fates, just a glimpse but of something much deeper than the bare facts of a person's life dredged up from FBI files, newspaper reports, employment records, and suchlike. It is interesting to ponder whether in later years Marjorie Cameron became the Babalon that Jack would have recognised. Had he lived maybe he would have seen his crude 1946 objective distilled by time into something of tangibly rich essence and under his nose all the time. There is a painting of Cameron's called "Fossil Angel" that is very beautiful (shown here). It made me think when I saw it, who is to say Parsons, had he lived, may not have one day seen in a painting by Cameron "the sign delivered by Our Lady Babalon Incarnate". *The Book of Babalon* was intended to be a book of guidance for this Incarnate Babalon—recounting her magical birth you might say—as indeed this book became for Cameron in later years after his death. There is the sense here of a deeper more real story, one that John Carter doesn't come close to telling, but nonetheless *Sex and Rockets* is still a valuable book so long as readers are aware that it contains some shoddy workmanship in the biographer's art and are prepared to go back to the original sources for themselves.



Chevalier, Parfrey, & the "home movies" rumour

On the web, one of the best archives of Jack Parsons' writings is Shedona Chevalier's *babalon.net*. Chevalier, of the Caliphate OTO "Living Flame" camp (founded in 1997 in memory of Jack Parsons, although "living flame" is actually L Ron Hubbard's phrase), appears to describe herself as an "Incarnate Avatar In Your Midst" but has lately clarified what she means by adding a codicil to her website, presumably to allay any excitement that she is actually Parsons' hoped-for Moonchild, explaining that we should think of the word "avatar" not in the true sense of the word as an incarnation of a deity but simply as we would if we used the word in cyberspace. *Babalon.net* is an excellent website and Shedona's obvious love for Jack is touching. She says she's writing her own book on Parsons, more inclined towards the magical aspects. Shedona engaged *Sex and Rockets* publisher Adam Parfrey in a lengthy correspondence on his inclusion of a paragraph on p 183 stating that after the explosion home movies were found in a trailer in a box decorated with snakes and dragons in which Jack was filmed having sex with his mother and the family dog.

Shedona took exception to the inclusion of what she saw as mere hearsay without any evidence. Although it is true that Jack never wrote anything about sex with dogs he did write concerning himself in his *Analysis by a Master of the Temple*: "The invocation of Babalon served to exteriorize the Oedipus complex." It is anyone's guess what he may have meant by that, and he did also confess to finding the vaguely incestuous and adulterous nature of having sex with his wife's 18-year-old sister Betty (Sara Northrup), after his wife ran off with one of his friends from the OTO and before Marjorie Cameron came on the scene, a bit of a turn-on. Here I paraphrase, he actually phrases it thus, addressing himself: "the act of adultery tinged with incest served as your magical confirmation in the Law of Thelema", by which I presume he interprets "Do what thou wilt" essentially as an overcoming of taboo, interestingly enough. Jack does also say, however, that Betty tore him away from "the now unneeded Oedipus complex". There seems to be a lot being alluded to here.

The home movies rumour must have been music to Adam Parfrey's ears. After being an underground writer for a while—and his *Fucking Andrea Dworkin* in issue 4 of *RAPE* magazine is quite funny—Parfrey made his name with the book he edited and published *Apocalypse Culture* (1987), which Hakim Bey described as "art-creep death nerdism & Nazi shit-eating" in a letter to me in *KAOS* 13. Hakim's work was included in the book but when he saw the finished product he disassociated himself from it on a point of principle, saying:

> People must be made to realise that this is not a two-sided fight, Prudes vs Cool Guys, or Leftists vs Daring Intellectuals Dabbling In The Fascist Camp. I've said it afore and I'll say it agin: my brand of Chaos is utterly opposed to these slime-mound serial-murder buffs & mutilation artists.

Michael Staley's essay "The Babalon Working/Belovèd of Babalon" was included in the expanded and revised edition of 1990, under the title "Sorcerer of Apocalypse: John Whiteside Parsons", thus exposing 55,000 readers to his total misconception of Parsons' Babalon Working. *Apocalypse Culture II* came out in 2000, despite Parfrey's fear that the Internet had overtaken him in the grossness stakes since the first volume. Parfrey caters mostly for the type of people who collect crime-scene photos and some of the choicer forensic science manuals and whose idea of self-discovery is a session of tentative coprophilia or sexual congress with a vacuum cleaner. Parfrey may complain about not being taken seriously by the mainstream and believe himself to be on a blacklist in that not one of Feral House's books has ever been reviewed in the *New York Times* despite having over 50 books out and the Ed Wood film to its credit, but the plain truth is that even in the underground publishing scene he has always been at the shallow surface glamour end. Parfrey is personally interested in the occult, but only at the glitzy level. Before *Sex and Rockets* his main contribution to occult publishing was to ensure that all of Anton LaVey's works remained in print. LaVey was a friend of Parfrey's and *Apocalypse Culture II* contains a selection of pathetic letters people wrote to the pop Satanist. Stephen Lemons' interview with Parfrey on *salon.com* contains this amusing thumbnail sketch:

> Sept 20, 2000 | LOS ANGELES—Plump, suave and swathed in black, Adam Parfrey stands before me flipping through a gruesome stack of color photos depicting headless torsos, severed limbs and various bodies sliced and diced like mincemeat. Could be a Jeffrey Dahmer wet dream or the Hannibal Lecter cookbook—take your pick. Suddenly, a small frown appears on Parfrey's face.
>
> "I don't like the way this red looks here," he tuts. "Oh, here's an article we translated from Spanish titled 'Hacking Mom.' Seems the man attacked his mom with a machete. Macheteo a su madre."

Only Adam Parfrey could do a coffee-table book on hideous deaths in popular Mexican culture.

One thing that emerges from the Parfrey/Chevalier correspondence is that Adam Parfrey says he personally heard the home movies rumour from Harold Chambers, who knew Jack Parsons and a couple of the investigators at the time. In other words, Carter's source was Parfrey, and yet this is something that emerges solely in the

correspondence with Shedona Chevalier, in the book itself this snippet of information is accorded more or less the same weight as all the rest of the poorly sourced material. On the same page (183), Harold Chambers is also reported as saying that he had heard that a syringe containing a morphine-like substance was found in the blast debris, and that one investigator at the time believed Parsons' drug use contributed to his mishandling of explosives. No evidence is put forward to substantiate that Parsons was addicted to heroin, the clear implication. Was Adam Parfrey also the source for this piece of information? Surprisingly, Shedona Chevalier didn't bring this item up with him. One statement in *Sex and Rockets* that interests me is that Marjorie Cameron is supposed to have had an (illegal) abortion to which Jack consented after becoming pregnant during the Babalon Working (p 151), but knowing now that Parfrey was the source for the home movies rumour I wonder what else he may have been the source for. I'd like to know where Cameron mentioned this abortion, what exactly she said, when she said it, and to who she said it and why—pretty standard questions that ensure journalistic integrity. And in this, although it may seem like a lot of correspondence on a single paragraph, Shedona has actually highlighted a genuine concern about the validity of some of the information in the book. Let it be said, there is plenty of information in *Sex and Rockets* that is quite correct, and I know because I have personally checked a great deal of it, but unless readers have themselves studied the sources then how are they to weigh what they read when stupid errors have been detected and the citation is atrocious? It's a pity this so undermines Carter's actual work of research.

Some may wonder why mention was made in the book so boldly of the fact that "John Carter" is a pseudonym, on the dustjacket: "Author John Carter is the pseudonym of an individual who wishes to remain unknown." The Feral House press release at the time said it was because Mr Carter didn't wish to jeopardize his job by letting his employers know of his interest in the occult, but this doesn't quite explain why they felt it necessary to mention that John Carter was a pseudonym at all. The reason is that another hardly-known book appeared before *Sex and Rockets* that was obviously its precursor that was attributed to a different author. *Jack Parsons and the Fall of Babalon* by Paul Rydeen was published in 1995 by Crash Collusion Publishing, Berkeley CA, an 80 page centre-stapled book that does not mention the home movies rumour, the hypodermic syringe, or Cameron's abortion. *Sex and Rockets* is a greatly expanded version of this earlier book.

The correspondence between Chevalier and Parfrey can be found on *babalon.net*, along with a collection of Jack Parsons' writings (including his letters to Cameron) and articles about him, and reviews of Babalon-associated books and movies. Parsons' FBI files obtained under the Freedom of Information Act can also be found there in PDF.

Parsons removed without permission classified papers relating to jet propulsion motors and rocket propellants from the Hughes Aircraft Company, Culver City, California, on September 15, 1950, which concerned research he himself had been involved with, in order to help him seek employment in the field in Israel. The evidence was found insufficient to bring him to trial for espionage, but it was regarded that his integrity was no longer sufficient to allow him access to Top Secret materials and his security clearance was withdrawn on January 7, 1952. The file also deals with the earlier temporary loss of his clearance in 1948. The FBI files make more interesting reading than I expected, Jack's plans to set up some kind of rocket establishment in Israel comes out and, according to Carter, is where he and Marjorie Cameron would have gone after their "vacation" or explosives testing trip to Mexico, had he not been killed. It's interesting to ponder the Antichrist setting up a rocket facility in Israel.

A 95-page collection of Parsons' essays containing some of his political views in addition to occult ideas is still in print, only brief extracts of which can be found on the web: *Freedom is a Two-Edged Sword* by John Whiteside Parsons, published as issue 1 of *The Oriflamme* by the Caliphate OTO in association with New Falcon, 2001.

"Zack Carson" and *The Profit*

A character based on Jack Parsons features in the satirical independent film *The Profit*, about a pulp fiction writer turned guru by the name of L Conrad Powers who founds the Church of Scientific Spiritualism and sees the world as a dime novel. Any similarity between L Ron Hubbard and the Church of Scientology is of course purely coincidental. L Conrad Powers gains his evil hypnotic powers from "Zack Carson", cult leader of a dark Satanic sect of the Beast 666, which engages in a practice known as "sex magick" and so Zack has his temple in his bedroom. L Conrad Powers steals Zack's Egyptian talisman and it becomes the symbol of his ever expanding control over the minds of his followers, who he offers eternal life, so long as they have a huge wad.

In reality, after the Babalon Working Hubbard defrauded Parsons of his fortune (*The Book of Antichrist* mentions $50,000) and absconded with Betty, who later became Hubbard's second wife. Hubbard bought a few boats with Parsons' money. Hubbard and Betty managed to set sail to escape Jack who was hot on their trail when he realised he had been conned. Jack retired to his hotel room and, not accepting that he had been thwarted, enlisted occult forces by drawing out a magic circle and invoking Bartzabel, the mighty spirit of Mars, which apparently gave rise to a sudden squall that ripped the

sails of Hubbard's yacht, forcing him and Betty back to port (see JP's letter to Crowley of July 5, 1946), but Parsons succeeded in recovering only a small amount of his money. Before all this happened, Parsons trusted Hubbard implicitly and described him in a letter to Crowley thus:

> Although he [Hubbard] has no formal training in Magick, he has an extraordinary amount of experience and understanding in the field. From some of his experiences I deduce that he is in direct contact with some higher intelligence, possibly his Guardian Angel … He is the most Thelemic person I have ever met, and is in complete accord with our own principles.

When journalists from the *Sunday Times* dug into the Yorke collection at the Warburg in 1969 and published a story about Hubbard's connection to Aleister Crowley via Parsons the Scientologists issued an official statement claiming that Hubbard had been sent in by Naval intelligence to break up a black magick sect at a house in Pasadena occupied by nuclear physicists, Hubbard even managed to rescue a girl (Betty) that the cult were using.

At the time of writing, *The Profit* is not on general release, amid claims of interference by Scientologists, who are extremely litigious and fearful of the ridicule this film exposes them to. For the present the director seems satisfied with showing the film exclusively at an independent cinema in Clearwater, Florida, the Mecca for Scientologists. The writer and director, Peter Alexander, was a Scientologist for 20 years before leaving in 1997 and claims to have personally poured over $1-million into the Church over the years before realising it was a sophisticated fraud.

Although the film is targeted at Scientology, an interesting side-issue is whether the film will incline people to wonder about the truth behind Zack's black magick sect.

A more serious film about Jack Parsons is planned. The film rights to *Sex and Rockets* have been optioned by Don Murphy of Angry Films/Sony, the producer of *Permanent Midnight* and *Natural Born Killers*. Kenneth Anger, who lived with Marjorie Cameron for a few years and is a member of the A∴A∴, said in an interview in November 2000 that he had been approached by Don Murphy to make a full-length film of Parsons' life. Anger has his own theory on Parsons' death that isn't mentioned in Carter's book, in an interview in the second issue of *The Fenris Wolf* (1991) he said he was convinced he was murdered by the billionaire Howard Hughes, whose agents had earlier kidnapped him in a limousine.

Professor Steczynski's *Apocalypse*

APOCALYPSE: Meditations on the Visions of John
http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/relarts/apocalypse/index.html

reviewed by Joel Biroco

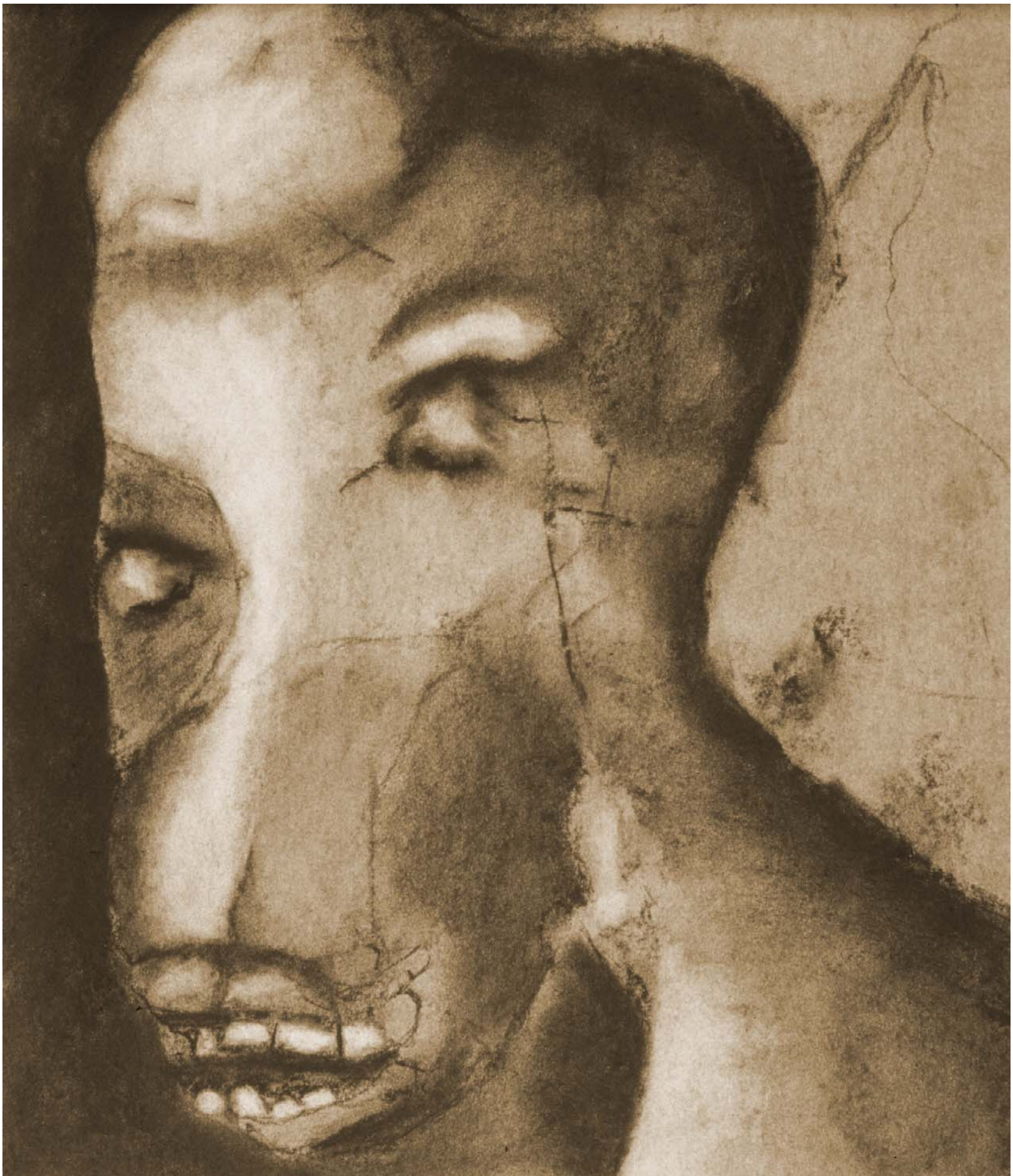
When I came across this website in a search on the Great Whore of Babylon, I was astounded by Professor John Steczynski's gorgeous drawings covering the entirety of the Apocalypse, 42 in all, and his imaginative rendition of Babylon's Beast and the Great Red Dragon and sought permission to reproduce two of them at high resolution in *KAOS* (see pages 2 and 108). The intricacy of the style of fine-line hatching and also the intensity of the colour, particularly the red of the dragon in otherwise monochrome images, comes out more than it does in the low resolution scans on the website. Prof Steczynski, of Boston College, has for the past twenty years made pen and ink drawings and painted liturgical hangings. He states that his work comes out of the modernist rejection of explicit religious imagery that has occurred since the 1950s, that has, as he puts it, "begun to give way to a post-modernist absorption of ethnic traditions strongly imbued with religious themes". His choice to focus on the Apocalypse of St John during his sabbatical leave in 1997–1998 was inspired by the forthcoming millennium, given that many people associate "millennium" with the Apocalypse. He expands on this:

> There was a more pressing impetus, however. The extreme right might try to find ways to manipulate the appeal that the Apocalypse already has for Christians of a more fundamentalist orientation to promote its own political agendas for the millennium. I wanted my Apocalypse to remain true to John's vision, manifesting its full intensity. At the same time I wanted to embody a broader, more humanitarian understanding than others might, avoiding vindictive divisions into black/white, good/evil, us/them. I wished to affirm a God of love.

I was curious whether there was any reason he had decided not to draw the dragon or beast with horns, wondering whether it was to represent a more serpentine creature, something that looked like it may actually have existed:

> The question about the horns: the main reason was seeing the awkwardness which Dürer and others had in dealing with the unequal number of heads and horns and crowns. John probably had specific symbolic significance to each of these, but he was writing and not creating images. I guess I simply felt I wasn't able to find a satisfactory solution. I think I included horns in my earliest sketches. Probably if I decided it mattered enough, I could refocus on the problem and see what I come up with.

Steczynski's Apocalypse images are crying out to be published in a fine-art rendition of the *Book of Revelation*.



The Moon and Serpent Grand Egyptian Theatre of Marvels

by Alan Moore & Steve Moore

Dear Joel—You asked us for information concerning the Moon and Serpent Grand Egyptian Theatre of Marvels. As we've pointed out, one problem with this is that the Moon and Serpent Grand Egyptian Theatre of Marvels doesn't actually exist in the conventional sense; or if it does, we don't belong to it. Further to this, as far as we can deduce, the magical system evolved by this legendary and, in fact, mythical order is entirely based upon telling horrendous lies, both for shamanic and entertainment purposes. The following description of the order's origins is therefore, of necessity, a flimsy tissue of falsehood and delusion. All of the following names and facts, including those of Lucian of Samosata, A M Harmon, 1925, and the Harvard University Press, we made up about ten minutes ago, secure in the knowledge that none of your morbidly obese Lara Croft jack-off readership will ever bother to get up from their food-stained sofas and check this out.

According to the works of Lucian (Volume 4, translated by A M Harmon, Harvard University Press, 1925), the hero of our tale is a gentleman known as Alexander the False Prophet, a terrible name to go into business under. Alexander was born at the beginning of the 2nd century AD, in Abonoteichus, on the southern coast of the Black Sea (now Inebolu, in Turkey). By his teenage years, Alexander had developed into a strikingly beautiful young man, and, not coincidentally, a rent-boy. In this capacity he swiftly attracted the attention of a local quack-doctor and hermetic huckster with a nice line in philtres and incantations who claimed to be a student of Apollonius of Tyana but, like everyone else in this history, was probably lying. Living with this Black Sea Barnum over the next few years, Alexander underwent a crash course in 2nd century chicanery, so that upon the death of his mentor (and the passing of both his boyish charms and his hustler career) the young man had a ready-made new line of business to move into.

Around this time, by now in his early 20s, Alexander fell in with a reputedly abominable Byzantine choral lyricist named Cocconas, which means "nut". Like a late Roman Hope and Crosby in *The Road to Ephesus*, this pair travelled the region for a considerable period purveying quackery and sorcery and, as Lucian remarks, "trimming the fatheads". ("Trim the fatheads" has, of course, become one of the principal commandments and guiding aphorisms of the present-day Moon & Serpent movement. As a result of following this simple and lucid instruction, we're raking it in. You can't say that about *The Book of the Law*.) After a couple of decades of such activities, the duo washed up in the province of Bithynia where they were taken under the wing, if not the duvet, of "a rich Macedonian woman, past her prime but still eager to be charming". It may be that she was herself charmed by the charismatic Alexander, who at this point seemingly possessed an almost Rasputin-like sexual *gravitas* and allure. Tall, fair-skinned and godlike, he had glowing eyes and what sound very much like hair-extensions; a crusty from *The Village of the Damned*.

Lining their pockets at the woman's expense, Alexander and Cocconas accompanied their patroness upon her return trip home to Pella, ancient capital of Macedonia. Perhaps she'd tired of them, or perhaps, having maxed out her credit-cards, they'd tired of her. Whatever the event, a new scam was required.

As it happened, Pella, in this period, was pretty much Snake City. Around 500 years before, our Alexander's psychopathic and more-famous namesake had been born there, reputedly the offspring of his mom, Olympias, and either Zeus in the form of a snake, or a snake with a smooth line in date-rape patter. Subsequently, these ophidians became the pet of choice in Pella. Tame and sweet, they played with children, slept with women and, allegedly, "took milk from the breast just like babies". No pap without a python, no boob without a boa. Inspired by the compliance and manageability of these impressive reptiles, Alexander and Cocconas purchased an unusually striking specimen for a few coppers (probably not their own) and took it on with them to Chalcedon.

In Chalcedon they forged bronze tablets which proclaimed that soon Asclepius, snake-friendly god of healing, would take up his residence in Abonoteichus. Furtively buried then miraculously discovered in the temple of Apollo, this early, innovative ad-campaign worked well enough to prompt the founding of a temple in Abonoteichus ready for the god's arrival and laid the groundwork for the serpent-sting to follow. Leaving Cocconas in Chalcedon to work his jingle-writer's magic on some hot new oracles, our hero-turned-snake-smuggler took off for Abonoteichus, his squirming cargo covertly in tow. Cocconas, sadly (or conveniently), did not survive to reap the benefits of his and Alexander's scheme, expiring not long after from a viper bite. Or something.

Snappily-dressed in white and purple tunic with a white cloak at the shoulder, hair

in fetching ringlets, Alexander seized the crowd's attention with a nicely-judged attack of rabies, chewing soapwort till the epileptic foam ran down his chin (a mark of class in ancient Greece). During this stage of his career, our boy had cleverly rebranded himself as direct descendant of the gods. As Alexander told it, he was son to Podaleirius, and thus the grandson of Asclepius, great-grandson of Apollo, great-great-grandson of almighty Zeus himself. Oh, and he was descended from Perseus on his mother's side as well. While all the locals must have been aware that Alexander was the offspring of obscure and humble folk, their faith in oracles convinced them that here in their sight was: "a scion of Perseus, dear unto Phoebus; this is divine Alexander, who shareth the blood of the Healer". Presumably the oracle in question represented one of Cocconas's better days. Certainly, along with all the frothing-at-the-mouth, this lurid genealogy helped to establish Alexander in Abonoteichan gossip-columns and society pages as a person to watch out for, one way or another.

In the small hours of the night preceding Alexander's master-stroke, he crept out and concealed a blown goose-egg containing a small newborn serpent in a puddle at the temple that had been erected in the fuss that followed the "discovery" of Cocconas's tablets back in Chalcedon. It was here on the next day that he performed his finely choreographed miracle. Naked save a loin-cloth, Alexander ran into the market-place, thrashing his lengthy locks about like a devotee of Cybele, or perhaps the drummer out of Motorhead. Working the crowd with glossolalic babble and with mentions of Apollo and Asclepius, he led them to the temple, whereupon he reached into the water and retrieved his previously planted egg, to gasps of great amazement from the multitude. Cracking it with his thumbnail he allowed the concealed snake to wind into his palm, at which the gathered throng went nuts and cheered and did a Mexican Wave, welcoming the deity. Pleased with his work our man went home, taking his sacred maggot with him.

Alexander let the city have a day or two to simmer. From the neighbouring provinces a horde of theological away-supporters flooded into Abonoteichus, while from the prophet's den a trickle of stage-managed leaks revealed the serpent to have grown to a prodigious size, evolved a semi-human head and mastered Greek. Finally, in darkened chambers Alexander's squamous god was ceremoniously revealed: its massive length was coiled about its self-appointed high priest's body as he sat upon a couch there in the gloom, inviting the spectators to lay hands upon its coils and satisfy themselves that it was real. The snake's neck seemed to vanish under Alexander's arm, where next appeared, hung down over his shoulder, its extraordinary head. This was a masterpiece of both conception and construction. Made of linen, the false head bore a resemblance to a dog or sheep, the lengthy muzzle both concealing and facilitating an ingenious

mechanism that would make the creature's jaws appear to move while a black tongue controlled by horse-hairs flickered in and out. Unlike the serpents of the natural world this monster's eyes were hidden by inscrutable and sleepy lids, perhaps to dodge the problem of realistic eyeballs in an age where glass had only limited availability. The crowning glory was its hair, long golden tresses spilling down, conveniently masking the ambiguous point at which this ersatz cranium joined with the real snake, drowsing head tucked under Alexander's arm. The dim light in the room no doubt greatly improved this curious illusion, possibly abetted by whatever other ritualistic showman's tricks the seasoned conman had decided to employ in order to enhance the sheer disorienting weirdness of the atmosphere.

The audience, having run their fingertips across the warm dry scales and watched the coiled length shift and move, were by this time assured of the god's authenticity. The prophet Alexander was now, as they say, ready to rock. To a hushed auditorium the creature swayed mesmerically, then, opening its artificial lips, it spoke:

"Glycon am I, the grandson of Zeus, bright beacon to mortals!"

This celestial Charlie McCarthy act, predictably, brought the house down. Alexander had established himself with one swift, ingenious sleight-of-hand as the Grand Poobah of a cult that would propel him into a position of enormous influence extending from the Black Sea to the Adriatic, and which would survive him by a century.

So, after that it was down to business, with Alexander's Rag-time Oracle and Patent-Medicine Show. No, he wasn't selling Snake-oil (that would have been uncouth); Alexander's cure-all was an ointment of bear's grease. He swore by it. So do we (in fact, we're often heard to exclaim: "Oh, bear's grease!"). And as for the oracles …

Well, working on the notion that things must be better the more they cost, Alexander (or Al, as we like to think of him, especially when we think of other lying books that have the same word in their titles) naturally charged four times as much as any other oracle centre in the vicinity. And the fatheads bought it, big-time. Some oracles were given vocally, by Glycon himself; others were given overnight, after Al had had the chance to "steam open the envelopes" containing the questions; some were given to no one in particular, answering questions that had never been asked (always a marvellous trick if you can get away with it). And some were in "Scythian". Now, Alexander couldn't speak Scythian any more than we can, but that was okay. No one else in Abonoteichus could speak it either, so when folks heard Al babbling "foreign", they were mightily impressed. Yes sir.

So that's how the serpent fits into things. Now for the Moon.

Possessing the only incarnated god extant within the western world, Al's notoriety rapidly spread across the empire, ultimately reaching Rome itself. This prompted large amounts of Rome's god-hungry citizenry to decamp *en masse* for Abonoteichus and stage a beatific toga-party. Foremost in their ranks was one P Mummius Sisenna Rutilianus, sometime consul, sometime governor, all-round prestigious and rich geezer. It would seem Rutilianus, even for those theomanic times, was more than usually godstruck and would pause to worship and commune with any wreath-adorned or oil-anointed wayside stone that he might chance to come across. If his religious fervour could be roused by any greasy rock then we can but imagine what he'd make of a giant talking human-headed snake with hair.

We can also imagine just what Alexander made of our Rutilianus. No doubt drachma-signs were flashing in his eyes when first the full potential of Rutilianus's extraordinary gullibility occurred to him. "Hey, if you like my human-headed snake, I've got this bridge you might be interested in." The bridge in question led from earth to heaven in the person of an alleged daughter sired by Alexander on the Moon-goddess Selene (who'd apparently been overcome with lust for Alexander while he slept one night). Where this "daughter" may have been produced from, we can only speculate. It is, however, a safe bet that no such speculations long absorbed Rutilianus. As a credulous sexagenarian he was clearly tickled pink by both his young wife and the prospect of a goddess as his mother-in-law. Why, he'd practically be one of the celestial family, almost a god himself. The greasy rocks would come and worship him instead.

Rutilianus was, before long, made the governor of Asia. Being Alexander's son-in-law, Rutilianus could extend the influence of Alexander's cult throughout the empire, introducing Glycon into high society. Meanwhile, back home in Abonoteichus, a full-blown Moon-and-Serpent ceremonial mystery theatre was about to make its debut.

Lucian describes it as a three-day ceremony with priestly offices and torchlight rallies, annually held, in perpetuity. The first day was a recap ("Previously, on *Moon & Serpent* …"), running through the whole soap-opera genealogy from Zeus down to Asclepius, passing through Leto and Apollo and Coronis, for the benefit of viewers who tuned in late. The second day presented a retelling of the origins of Glycon (a diminutive of *glycus*, meaning "sweet", thus "Sweety"), where the god presumably starred as himself. ("I just got in from Olympus. Boy, is my belly sore. No but seriously. Anybody in from Ephesus …?")

The final day commenced with Alexander tastefully presenting a depiction of his mother being shagged by Podaleirius, then built up to a rousing climax when the audience was treated to a tableau which showed Alexander and Selene engaged in conceiving the wife of Rutilianus: "the torch-bearer and hierophant was our Endymion, Alexander. While he lay in full view, pretending to be asleep, there came down to him from the

roof, as if from heaven, not Selene but Rutilia, a very pretty woman, married to one of the emperor's stewards. She was genuinely in love with Alexander and he with her; and before the eyes of her worthless husband there were kisses and embraces in public. If the torches had not been numerous, perhaps the thing would have been carried even further."

This enthralling blend of mystery religion and Raymond Revue-Bar did marvellously well for a contemporary cult. Marcus Aurelius himself sought out the snake-god's prophecy concerning his then-current war in Germany against the Marcomanni and the Quadi. While Alexander drank a glass of water, Glycon recited the alphabet and then advised the emperor to dump two live lions and a load of perfume in the Danube, so that a victory would be secured. Yeah, right. When 20,000 Romans died as a result of this disastrous advice, our boy Al cited the Delphic Defence, claiming a victory had been secured by *somebody*.

Despite a prophecy that he'd die struck by lightning at age one hundred and fifty, Alexander was brown bread before his seventieth birthday. Nasty business. One leg mortified, groin full of maggots. Al had always claimed to have a gold thigh like Pythagoras, so maybe it was metal fatigue. His cult, however, did survive for roughly one hundred and fifty years before being struck by the lightning of the Christian anti-Pagan pogroms during the 4th century. *C'est la vie*. *Che sera sera*. *Hasta la vista*.

Time passed.

The current order of Moon and Serpent Grand Egyptian Theatre of Marvels was inaugurated following a chance event in early 1994. While browsing at a Farringdon Road bookstall, folded in a *Look-In* annual from the early 1970s, we found a letter from Frau Anna Sprengel. Honestly, I ask you, what are the chances of that? In the letter, Annie (as she insists we call her) states that all her earlier letters were, as she puts it, "eine vind-up. Who says ve Germans haf no sense of humour?" Revealing that the one true mystic order of the ages is in fact the aforementioned Moon and Serpent Grand Egyptian Theatre of Marvels, she then authorised us to found lodges throughout the western world, to dress up in fancy frocks like girls, and to take everybody's money. We admit that various other occult orders and authorities have cast aspersions on the authenticity of our Frau Sprengel letter, but fuck 'em.

As for the teachings of our order, they are simple and direct:

1. Fuck 'em.

2. Trim the fatheads.

3. We understand the Moon to be Selene, and to be the cabalistic Yesod, and thus the entirety of dream, romance and the human imagination.

4. We understand the Serpent to be Glycon, to be the bronze serpent on the cabalistic tree, and as an icon of the twisting double-helix DNA, thus the entirety of life itself and human flesh.

5. We understand that in the interplay of these two deities, reprised in atu-21 of the Thoth tarot, is originated the whole Theatre of Marvels, which is to say the Universe.

6. Everyone must believe every single word that we say, even if it's all like *The Book of the Law*, and about pushing cripples downstairs.

7. Everything is true, nothing is permitted.

8. Will from *Pop Idols* shall be the whole of the law.

Summary

Glycon was made up by Alexander. Given that Lucian is a notorious liar and author of *A True Story*, which is full of egregious falsehoods, it is almost certain that Alexander was made up by Lucian. Having confessed ourselves to dishonesty in our opening paragraphs, we may as well confess that we made up Lucian. You, Joel, are widely recognised as the least reliable occult source since Sooty, and your readers will surely by now have realised that you yourself are making us up. I mean, what are the chances of you knowing two high-powered comic-book professionals like us? As if. Your readers may next realise, upon fruitlessly scanning the birth records for anyone who has ever had "Biro Company" for a surname, that you are entirely an invention of theirs, a hate-figure with which they externalise their own self-loathing. It will take your readership only one small step to comprehend that they, as creations of the DNA, have been made up by Glycon, who, historically, speak with forked tongue.

As to your enquiry with regard to our initiation rituals and grades, there are no initiation rituals, or if there are they are so impossibly demanding that no one has ever completed them, or would wish to. We'd certainly never put ourselves through anything like that, and thus do not actually belong to the Order, which isn't taking on new members anyway. Conspiratorial affiliations with other secret societies include the Process Church of the Final Judgement, and the I-Spy Club (whose Chief I-Spy, presiding over long

car-journeys, is one of our secret chiefs. "It does not matter if Chief I-Spy exists, simply that the universe *behaves* as if Chief I-Spy exists.").

As for grades, we follow the example of Pete Carroll's Illuminates of Thanateros by eschewing pretentious grades and self-aggrandizing titles, nobly demonstrating that despite all appearances to the contrary, we are in fact ordinary common-as-muck people like you and everybody else.

Love and Judge Dredd are the law, Love and Judge Dredd under will.

Yours cordially,

Alan Moore
EXQUISITE BASILISK of the Pittering Mansions, Lord High Skeletor, Made Man and Capo (33rd Degree Sicilian Rite) (and could I make clear for the record that the 33rd Degree Sicilian Rite HAS NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH HOMOSEXUALITY), Arkela and senior wand-monitor.

Steve Moore
GRANDILOQUENT TUSKER, Euphonious Squid of the Humming Enchymoma, Commissioner of Martian Affairs, Madame Guillotine and junior hornswoggler.

Zobop passports

by Joel Biroco

I saw a photograph of a zobop passport in *Voodoo: Truth and Fantasy* by Laënnec Hubon (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995, p 63). A zobop is a sorcerer belonging to a secret society in Haiti. Apparently these passport documents allowed the bearer to roam freely by day and by night without being molested. The photograph of the zobop passport inspired me to create a series of zobop passports in watercolour and Indian ink, a couple of which are shown here in *KAOS* (pages 66 and 78).

But the question arose in my mind as to who might be checking these passport documents, so I did a little research and came across a fascinating article from the Summer 1979 issue of *Magonia* (http://www.magonia.demon.co.uk/arc/70/haiti.html). In "An abduction syndrome in Haitian folklore", Peter Rogerson, seeking parallels between UFO abduction stories and folkloric abduction stories, draws attention to a passage in Alfred Metraux's 1959 book *Voodoo in Haiti* concerning a panic that gripped Haitian peasants, probably in the 1940s, about a motor car that was said to abduct people. Rogerson notes:

> In the capital Port-au-Prince the car was known as the auto-tigre (tiger-car); in Marbial, where Metraux conducted his fieldwork, it was the motor-zobop, a vehicle supposedly driven by the zobop, members of a secret society of sorcerers having many of the characteristics of traditional witches. This car had bluish beams for its headlights.

Metraux spoke to several people who claimed to have been abducted by the motor-zobop who said they had managed to escape because they were protected by voodoo. Rogerson doesn't mention zobop passports, but clearly such an item would have been useful if you came across the motor-zobop late one night. Wade Davis in *The Serpent and the Rainbow* suggests the zobop and other secret societies were "a quasi-political arm of the vodoun society" (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985, p 211–212). Manuel Carballal says: "The Zobop terrorized the population by kidnapping in the dark of night anyone considered a traitor to the community in order to 'bring them to justice'

in a cruel fashion." On the original zobop passports the writing would usually be in French, and an official-looking sticker such as a stamp-duty sticker or perhaps even the seal from a cigarbox or something similar would be stuck on the passport together with a stamped number. In the only example of a zobop passport I have seen the main illustration is a naïve drawing of a person. On my own zobop passports the writing is "spirit writing" done in a trance state, inspired by the tradition of "protective spirit writing" that occurs in folk cultures of the American south, originating from West Africa, as exemplified by the paintings of the illiterate artist J B Murry. While such spirit writing is simply scribble, and not language, it is done for magical protective effect and so intention informs the spontaneous writing. And J B Murry did claim to be able to read his spirit writing through a distorting bottle of holy water. Similarly, myself, when stoned…

Joel Biroco Exhibition

Joel Biroco will be having an exhibition & sale of his paintings some time in the future. This event will be held in London. If you would like to be notified about the exhibition, send your contact details to: kaosbabalon@hotmail.com

Artwork credits

Derek Arridge created the cover and the illustrations on pages 9, 23, 31, 34, and 125; this artwork is embedded in the PDF in vector format and is best viewed on Acrobat 5 reader with "smooth line art" checked, which is not switched on by default (Edit ⇒ Preferences ⇒ Display ⇒ Smooth line art). Sarah Haras drew the two pictures on pages 154 and 186, which came from staring at charcoal smudges on paper until something—"The Indwellers"—emerged. Prof John Steczynski drew the pen and ink Apocalypse images on pages 2 and 108, which are part of a set of 42 on the web (see the review on page 184). Joel Biroco painted the two "zobop passports" on pages 66 and 78 (the vever on the latter is that of Papa Legba), and the crow falling from the sun on page 167, in black Indian ink and watercolour. The drawing of Lam on page 35 is by Aleister Crowley and is presently owned by Kenneth Grant. The painting on p 178, "Fossil Angel", is by Marjorie Cameron.

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